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YU-GI-OH!

THE MOVIE

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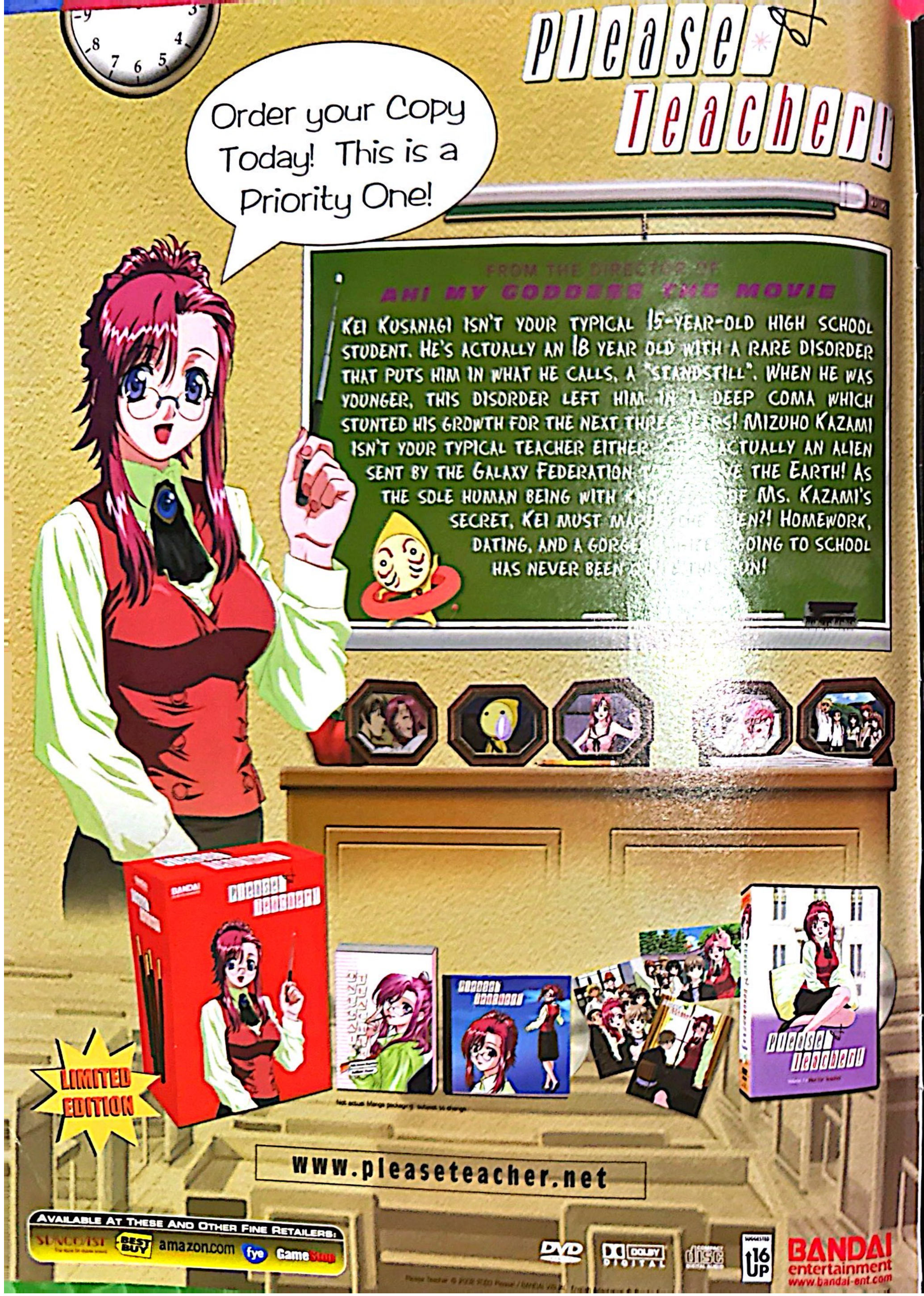
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FROM THE DIRECTOR OF

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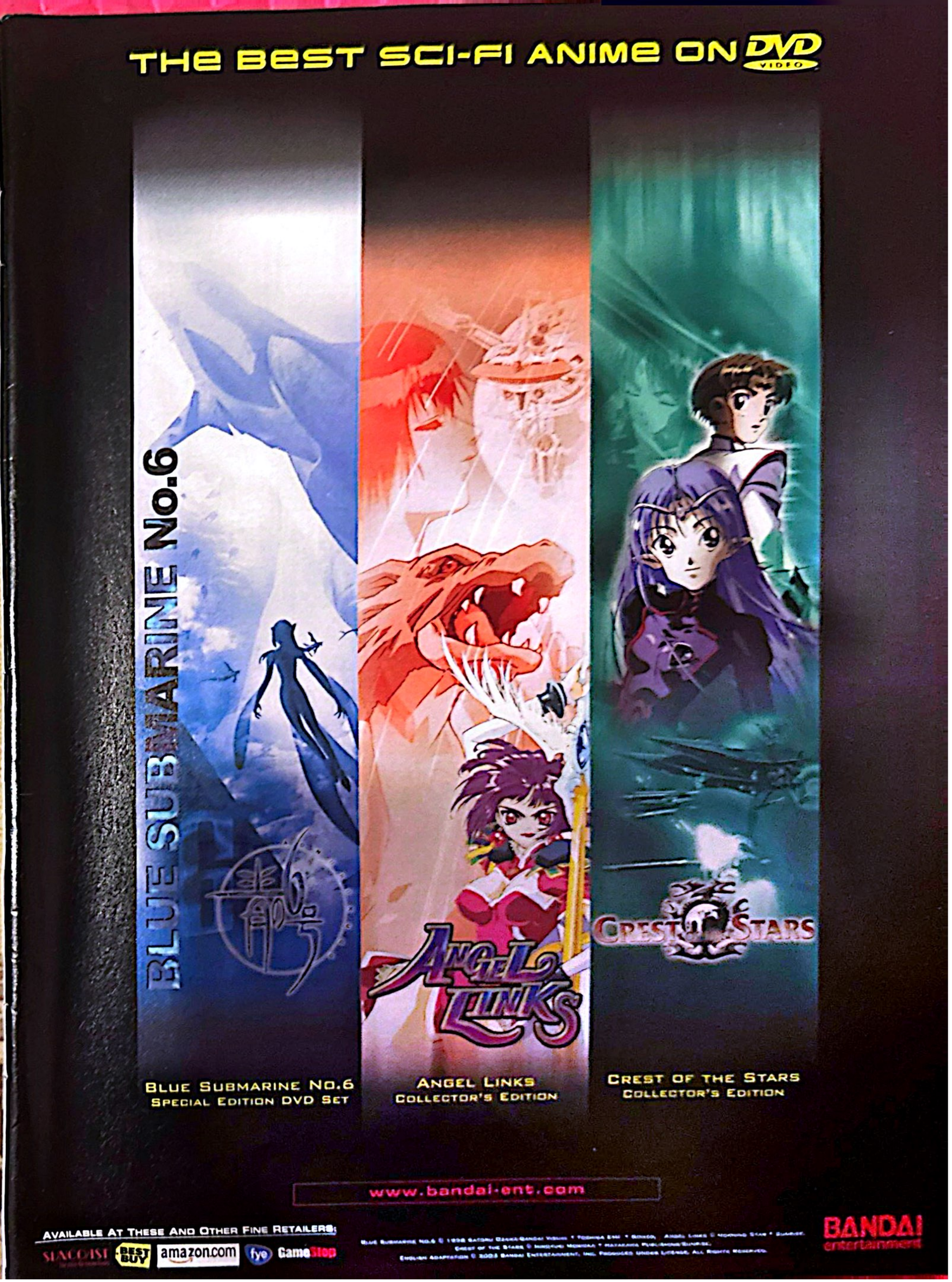
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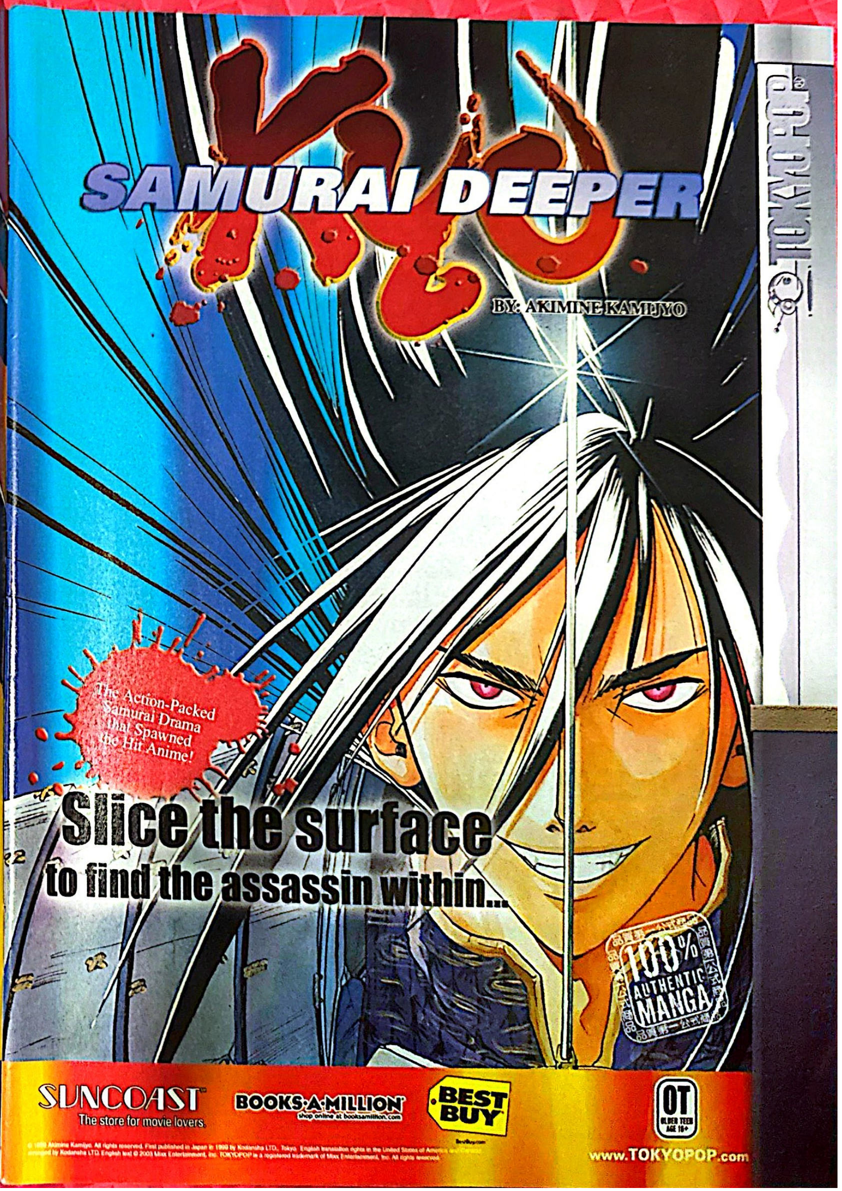
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ANIME INSIDER

#8 • AUGUST 2003

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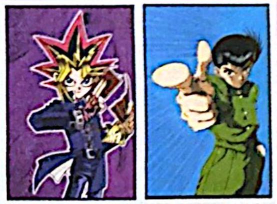
ON THE COVERS



Yusuke wants *you*...to pull his finger, courtesy of FUNimation and Yoshihiro Togashi, while Yugi will trade you a Blue-Eyes White Dragon not to, thanks to 4Kids Entertainment and Kazuki Takahashi.

20
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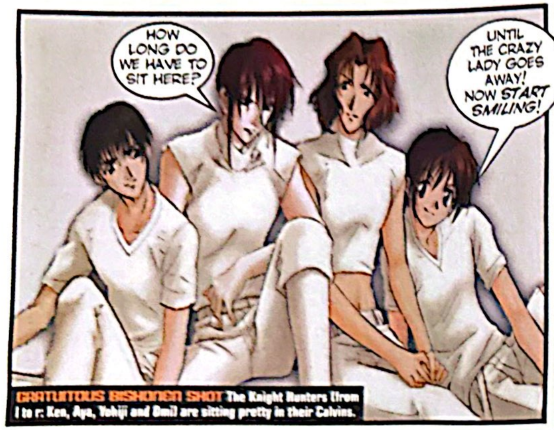
HOW LONG DO WE HAVE TO SIT HERE?
UNTIL THE CRAZY LADY GOES AWAY! NOW START SMILING!

GRATUITOUS BISHONEN SHOT The Knight Hunters (from l to r: Ken, Aya, Yohji and Omi) are sitting pretty in their Calvins.

When *Anime Insider* went bimonthly, they needed to hire another editor to help oversee production. They wanted to get someone with a lot of anime knowledge, someone who understood the product, who could come up with cool and great ideas for feature articles.

I wonder if they know exactly what they've gotten themselves into.

I've been watching anime since 1993. From idol singers to mecha, the super-funny to the depressingly serious, I fell in love with it all and watched it all. I've been writing about anime professionally for two years, and I've been to a lot of conventions.

And I'm a girl. Precisely, I'm a college-educated woman who's seen this industry grow from an underground cult hobby to the worldwide phenomenon it is today.

"Anime is for everyone," I like to say, and that *especially* includes us girls. Just like the guys, we watch it, read the manga and play the video games.

So speaking to the girls reading this magazine, I understand your pain when you walk into your favorite anime or comics store and the guys at the counter ignore you. Or when your girlfriends don't understand why you like watching this "anime stuff".

Or when magazine editors (cough, cough, that means you, Doug and Rob) ignore the plaintive pleas to publish more pictures of cute guys (or "bishonen" in Japanese).

Well all of that's going to change. Starting right now.

Welcome to a new *Anime Insider*—one that encompasses the diverse tastes of the audience, both guys and girls, both young and old. Together, we'll explore the intellectual and artistic boundaries of this wonderful medium.

And we'll get to see cute guys along the way, too.

Trisha L. Sebastian
Associate Editor

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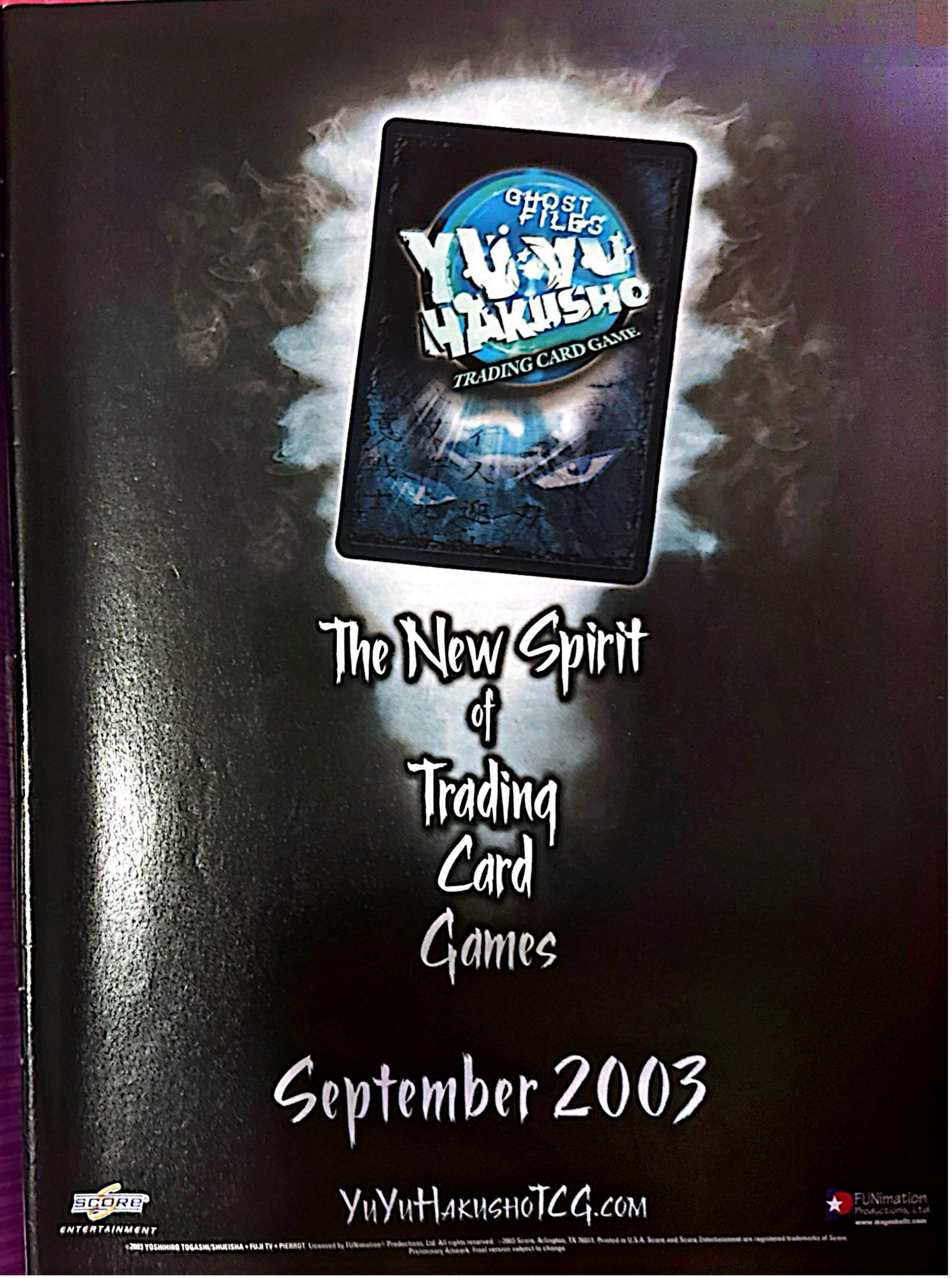

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ANIMAIL!

YOU'RE FANS YOUR MAIL

"Adult Swim" is getting canceled! Oh, not really. Settle down. I heard a lot of that while going through the ol' mailbag this time, and it started to freak me out. Check out this issue's first letter for a reality check.

Also this month, I was pretty surprised to learn that the VHS vs. DVD debate rages on—I thought that battle had been decided two years ago and VHS had slunk off into the graveyard with eight-track tapes and Betamax, where it belongs. Not so! At least one die-hard out there refuses to throw out his VCR, and he's real cranky about it.

Lastly, don't forget—your mail is real important to us, and we read every last letter! So keep writing!

SILLY ROBOT, THAT'S NOT YOUR GIRLFRIEND. IT'S A MAILBOX!
THEN WHY DOES IT KEEP TELLING ME TO PUT THE TOILET SEAT DOWN?
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DEAR ANIME INSIDER,

I just found out Cartoon Network was going to take "Adult Swim" off the air due to lack of ratings. I can't believe it! I don't know about you guys, but other than "Toonami," "Adult Swim" is the main source for my anime addiction!

Duncan Williams
via email

LOOK STEWIE—TRIGUN IS ON!
FOR EVERY ANIME YOU FORCE ME TO WATCH, I SHALL KILL YOU.

THE FAMILY GUY

You weren't the first person to ask us that this month—other frenzied fans have the same concerns you do.

Well, relax. You probably heard about the overall ratings for Cartoon Network going down, reported on by the New York Daily News. While that may be true, a Cartoon Network spokeswoman assured me that Adult Swim-s ratings are great and it isn't going anywhere. In fact, the recent debut of* Family Guy *on "Swim" drew Cartoon Network's biggest ratings for viewers 18-34 in 2003. That's an increase of 269% from the same time period a year ago.

C'mon, people, don't believe everything you read on the Internet! Unless it's about the time I hit four home runs in one Little League game.

ANIME INSIDER,

In issue #5, you wrote an article about the rise of DVD and the downfall of VHS. I just wanted to respond: *I hate DVDs.* I hate them. They are a pain in the neck, far too expensive for somebody who routinely buys anime, and quite frankly, if they're twice the price, why can't I recognize twice the quality?

As much as I hate DVDs, I hate the fact that people are no longer producing certain anime on VHS even more. I realize it will never be possible to eliminate DVDs from the market, so please tell companies to stop being so lazy and release all titles on both DVD and VHS.

If ADV does not release the subtitled *Sailor Moon* and *Sailor Moon R* on VHS, they will lose several customers, including myself. I know what the excuse will be: "There aren't enough people buying VHS. We're losing money." I know for a fact this is not true. I have a friend named Diana who owns over 800 anime videos, and she doesn't own a single DVD. I know 40 anime fans right in my area. Only two of them own DVD players. By eliminating VHS from the market, companies are losing thousands of customers, and people like me will buy far fewer videos.

Max L.
San Jose, CA

Whew. I should point out to be fair that the original letter was three times longer and touched on many more interesting points, but we just don't have the space!

Max, I appreciate where you're coming from, but let me share a different perspective. From my perspective, DVD is a godsend. I remember paying $29 for two subtitled* Ranma 1/2 *episodes on VHS in the not-so-distant past. That's a lot. Sure, you're enjoying cheaper VHS prices now, but only because the demand for them is drying up. For someone like me, DVD offers more episodes for less money than it used to, in digital clarity—often with cool extras—and I no longer have to worry that the local retailer only carries the dubbed versions that I don't care about.

...CAN'T BELIEVE DAWSON'S CREEK IS REALLY GONE...

BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE

Ken Wiatrek, ADV Films' marketing director, had this to add: "The sales of VHS are so much lower than the sales of DVD, especially in today's market, that it just doesn't make sense to sell VHS. It's purely a business decision. It's not about alienating any fans. We don't see enough VHS sales to warrant creating VHS copies of our programs any longer."

Wiatrek says kid-oriented programs still sell enough VHS copies to justify the cost, but for videos aimed at fans—like* Sailor Moon *uncut and subtitled—it just doesn't move enough product on VHS.

Max, buy a DVD player. Don't get left behind.

DEAR A.I.,

I'm a big fan of vampire anime and all I know is *Vampire Hunter D*, *Hellsing* and *Night-Walker*. Is there any other vampire anime you can recommend?

Asierralin Edwards
via email

By all means, check out the short film* Blood: The Last Vampire. *It's violent and not for the squeamish, but it's a visual masterpiece and unlike anything I've ever seen before.

Also* Vampire Princess Miyu *is plenty vamp-y. Check that out too.

I was going to end here with a joke about* The Drak Pack, *but nobody would get it. Sigh.

DEAR ANIME INSIDER,

Why do some female Japanese voice actresses play the voice of male anime characters? The voice of Goku from *Dragon Ball Z* in Japan is played by a woman, and so is the main character from the *Wild Arms* anime, and even Shinji Ikari from *Evangelion*!

Are they just continuing the tradition of having actors play the opposite gender? After all, in Japanese kabuki plays, male actors played female parts.

Bethany Sellers
via email

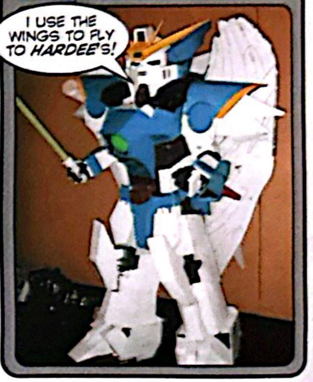
It doesn't have anything to do with tradition. It's simply often easier for women to do the voices

COSPLAY CAVALCADE

GUNDAM WING ZERO CUSTOM

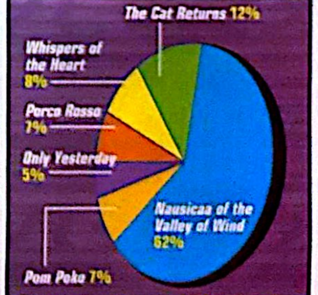
BY GLENN CRUZ

Man oh man! Glenn Cruz must be as crazy as one of the real *Gundam Wing* pilots to build such a perfect costume, using automotive steel and foamcore. Glenn showed his robo-stuff off at this year's Anime Boston convention where he and his friends won Best In Show for their efforts, and deservedly so. Send in your best costume pics with an explanation of how you made the outfits to Anime Insider, at 151 Wells Ave., Conger NY, 10920. Mission ...accomplished!


I USE THE WINGS TO FLY TO HARDEE'S!

WEBPOLL

WHAT UNRELEASED GHIBLI FILM DO YOU WANT BUENA VISTA TO PUT ON DVD NEXT?



Cast your vote in our latest poll at Anime-Insider.com!

OTAKU'S BLACK BOOK

HEY, ANIME FREAKS! Like a series? Hate a character? Just have something to say? Then write your favorite anime company and let 'em know what you've been thinking. Send your thoughts to the following addresses, and be sure to tell 'em that *Anime Insider* sent you. Power to the people!

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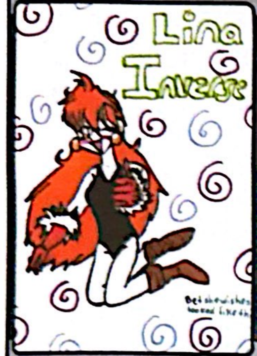

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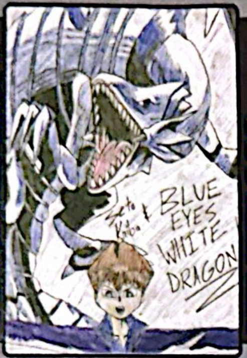
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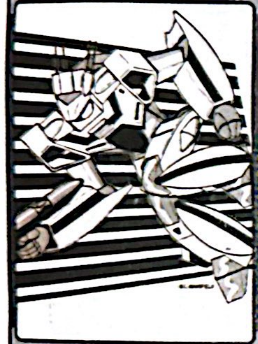

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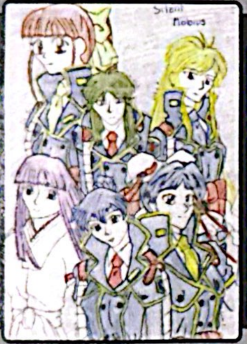

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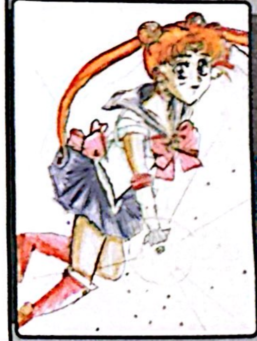

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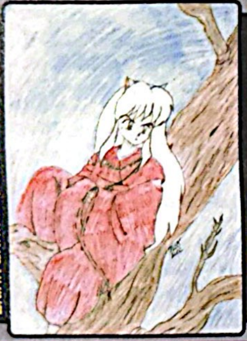

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Blvd, Suite 100Los Angeles,
CA 90066 (310) 397-4713
www.emanga.com
info@emanga.com

Toonami Cartoon Network
1065 Williams St.
Atalanta, Ga
30309
www.toonami.com

TOKYOPOP
5900 Wilshire Blvd.,
Ste. 2000 Los Angeles,
CA 90036-5020
(323) 692-6700
www.tokyopop.com
info@usa.tokyopop.com

Urban Vision
5120 West Goldleaf Circle
Suite 280
Los Angeles, CA 90056
(800) 338-6827
www.urban-vision.com
info@urban-vision.com

Viz Communications
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107
(415) 546-7073
www.viz.com
vizweb@hotmail.com

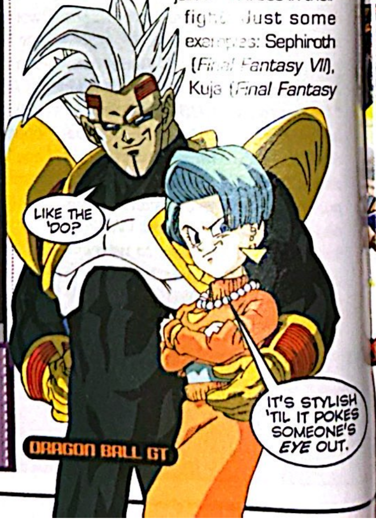
of youthful male characters than it is men. Men generally have deeper voices; women have higher voices. And it's easier to work with professional adult actors pretending to be young than it would be to work with more inexperienced kids who are actually the age of the characters they're playing.

Culture has nothing to do with it, either: lots of young, male cartoon characters in America are voiced by women: Bart Simpson, Bobby Hill, Tommy Pickles...

And Homer Simpson has actually been voiced by Fran Drescher for the last seven years...nobody ever noticed the switch.

DEAR ANIME INSIDER

Is it just me or is there some kind of connection between being evil and having light-colored hair in anything Japanese, whether it's manga, anime [illegible] video games? I've noticed this disturbing trend, while playing various video games and watching different anime. It seems [illegible] white-haired (or pale blonde on some occasions) guy is always the one to keep your [illegible]. If he's not already obviously evil, then [illegible] the one who betrays the heroes and [illegible] evil later. Or if he starts off the villain, [illegible] repent his evil ways at [illegible] point, and join the heroes in their fight. Just some examples: Sephiroth (*Final Fantasy VII*), Kuja (*Final Fantasy*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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Comic Mischief
Violence

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GAME BOY ADVANCE
CATCH IT ON THE FOX BOX
BANDAI

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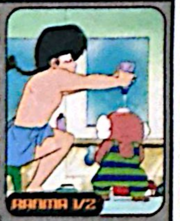
WORDS FOR THE WISE

Wanna Know What All These Anime Fans Are Blathering About? Here's the Vocabulary.

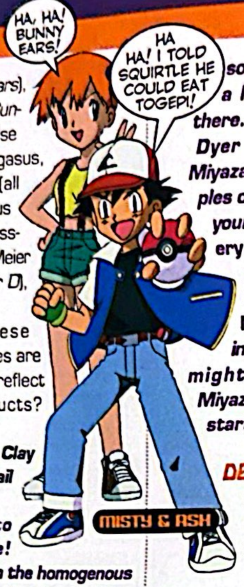
BENTO—[BEN-tow] A cold lunch served in a box will different compartments; often carried to school by students
BOKKEN—[BOWK-ken] A traditional wooden practice sword, blunt with no cutting edge
CHIBI—[CHEE-bee] A word meaning "small" or even "shrimp." Example: Sailor Chibi Moon.
HENTAI—[HEN-tie] Japanese for "pervert" or "perverted." Refers to naughty anime and manga too.
-KUN—[KOON] A suffix like -san or -sensei added to the end of the names of boys or young men.
MANGA—[MAHN-ga] Japanese comic books.
MANGA-KA—[MAHN-ga KA] Japa-nese word for creator of manga.
OTAKU—[o-TAH-koo] Hardcore anime fan. If you have a tattoo, you probably are one.
SEIYUU—[SAY-yoo] A voice actor or actress.
SENSEI—[SEN-say] Teacher on instructor. Also used as an honorific: "Onizuka-sensei."
SHOJI—[SHO-jee] A movable room partition made out of wood and rice paper. The doors slide on tracks.
SHÔNEN—[SHO-nehn] An adjective meaning "for boys." Shônen manga, shônen anime, etc. Shojo is the equivalent "for girls."

CULTURE SHOCKER

WHY THE JAPANESE DO THOSE WEIRD THINGS THEY DO


RANMA 1/2

Wow, look at all those nekkid people! Any longtime anime viewer has doubtless stumbled across a scene in a Japanese bathhouse, or *sentou* [SEN-toe]. Exploding populations in the Edo Period (1603-1867) made sentou a necessity, but in the modern Japanese world their number has declined. Whether bathing at a sentou or at home, it's the Japanese custom to do all the actual washing and rinsing beforehand, so that by the time they actually get in the bath, it's purely to relax.


HA, HA! BUNNY EARS!
HA HA! I TOLD SQUIRTLE HE COULD EAT TOGEPI!
MISTY & ASH

(X), Ramses (*Xenogears*), Char Aznable (*MS Gundam*), Zechs Merquise (*Gundam Wing*), Pegasus, Bakura and Marek (all from *Yu-Gi-Oh!*), Vicious (*Cowboy Bebop*), Sesshomaru (*Inu-Yasha*), Meier Link (*Vampire Hunter D*), etc, etc.

Do the Japanese think fair-haired types are inherently evil, and reflect this in their products? What's the deal?

Michelle Clay
via email

You might be onto something there! Here's my theory: in the homogenous populace of Japan, white hair is about as far away from the "normal" black hair as you can get. So for a young villain to sport white hair, you know right away he or she isn't an ordinary character. Also, if the villain had bright green or orange hair, that's somehow not as imposing as that stark white color.

On a related note, I'm only 29 and I'm starting to get gray hair. That makes me feel plenty evil.

DEAR ANIME INSIDER,

My dad loves anime, but my mom hates it. She says it's "demeaning to women." How do I find common ground for my mom, so she doesn't throw away all of my dad's and my *Patlabor* tapes?

Max Peterson
DeTour Village, MI

I'm the wrong guy to ask. So I passed your question along to Sarah Dyer, who writes the English-language adaptation of the excellent **Kodocha** ***manga (so excellent that it won*** **Anime Insider's** ***"Best Manga" award for 2002). "I think there's a lot of stuff that's totally not demeaning to women," she says. "Six, seven years ago, most everything you'd find would be big robots and tentacles and that sort of thing, but now ther a huge variety of stuff ou there."***

Dyer recommends the Haya Miyazaki films as the best examples of videos you can enjoy wi your mom. (I think **Kiki's Deli ery Service** ***and*** **Spirited Awa** ***would be great to star with—better save*** **Princes Mononoke** ***for later.) "Finding stuff he and his mom like might not be easy, but th Miyazaki films would be a great starting point," she says.***

DEAR ANIME INSIDER,

Could you find out if Misty an Ash ever get married whe they grow up?

Christine Bazemore
Statesboro, GA

Sadly, Ash's youthful idealism doesn't last into adulthood. He becomes a Pokémon poacher in his 20s, but one day gets caught in a Togepi trap and is forced to chew his own leg off. Later his corpse is found by the authorities, half-eaten by Squirtles.

Misty later becomes a champion figure skater and marries Meowth.

And with that, it's time to wrap up this hoojiggy for another month. Hey, keep those letters and drawings coming! Without you guys, there's no us! (Can't you feel the love?)

—Tom Root

Tom Root's new self-created nickname, "Yu Yu Hakutom," is catching on with exactly nobody.

Send yer letters to:
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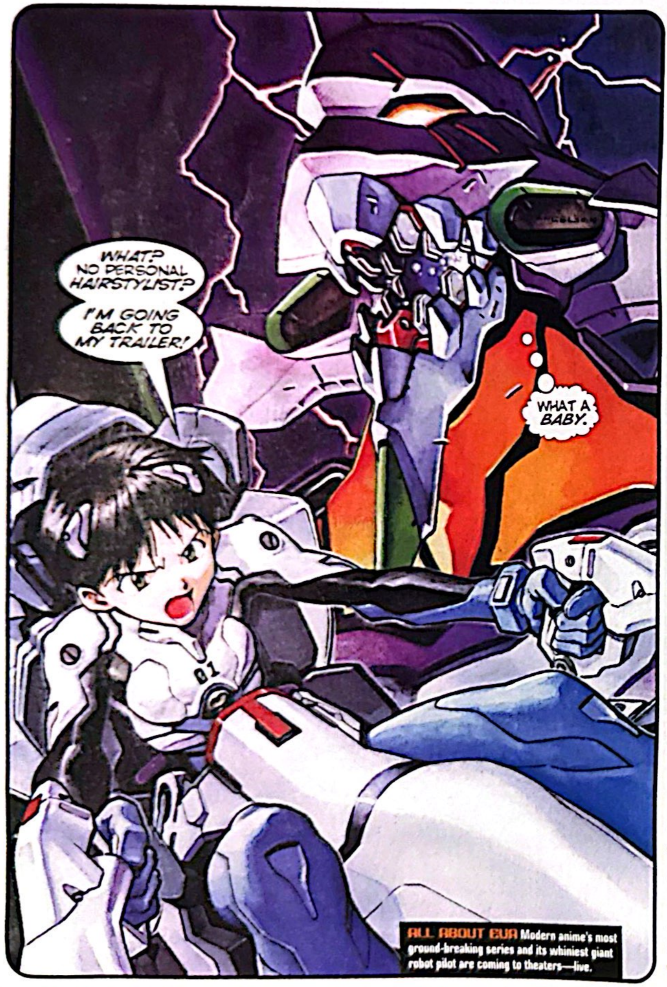
INSIDER NEWS+NOTES

A NEWER GENESIS

ADV Films Blasts Into Live-Action With 'Evangelion'


WHAT? NO PERSONAL HAIRSTYLIST?
I'M GOING BACK TO MY TRAILER!
WHAT A BABY.

ALL ABOUT EVA Modern anime's most ground-breaking series and its whiniest giant robot pilot are coming to theaters—live.

For all their special effects and movie making magic, Hollywood has never made a blockbuster with battlin' giant robots. Dinosaurs and Godzilla? Sure. Giant mecha knocking down cities? Never been done.

Leave it to an anime company to lead the way.

At the Cannes Film Festival, ADV not only announced the acquisition of the live-action movie rights to *Neon Genesis Evangelion*—one of the most admired and popular anime series ever—but ADV president and CEO John Ledford let slip that the film is already in development with original series producers Gainax and effects house Weta Workshop Ltd., who brought the award-winning *Lord of the Rings* films to life.

One of the oldest anime distributors in the U. S., ADV is not a stranger to producing their own animated films, having released *Sin* in 2000 with *Lady Death* and *Mutineer's Moon* in the works. But making the jump from producing animated movies to live-action ones is a big step for the Texas-based company.

"Our goal has always been to provide the kind of entertainment that we ourselves find entertaining," explained Ledford. "A live-action *Evangelion* is definitely something that we would line up to see at the theaters, so since it's within our abilities to make it happen, why not do it? If you're going to fire your guns, you might as well fire one of your biggest ones first."

And as far as big guns go, *Evangelion*'s a .357 Magnum. On the surface, it's the story of a young boy named Shinji who is asked to pilot one of the gigantic robots called EVAs against massive creatures called Angels who are out to destroy humanity. First broadcast in Japan on TV in 1995, it became a runaway hit thanks to the fantastic characterization and larger-than-life battle scenes.

As the story progresses, the surface gives way to *Evangelion*'s depths, which are a meditation on the very nature of self and the human psyche, which earned *Eva* critical acclaim and legions of devoted fans. But the series finale confused its viewers so much that they demanded explanations—and got them in the form of two feature movies that were filled with blood, death and the end of the world.

Since the announcement was made, fan speculation has run rampant on how ADV will adapt the series' intertwining themes and confusing conclusion. Will having an anime company at the helm produce a better movie compared to the live-action films so many of the uninitiated American filmmakers are working on? For now, representatives from ADV were very tight-lipped about everything from script to budget, saying that it's too early in the process for details. But that's not stopping New Zealand-based Weta Workshop from expressing their excitement about this project.

"We all love the fact that we are a part of what is going to be a remarkable journey," enthused Weta special effects supervisor Richard Taylor. "Our designers are absolutely thrilled to be offered this opportunity; we have many anime fans here whose passion for this genre will ensure that the designs for the cross over to live-action will remain true to the heart of the anime."

Since Weta is located in New Zealand where *Lord of the Rings* was filmed, one wonders if *Evangelion* would be filmed there as well. "Of course we would be delighted if New Zealand was chosen to be the location for photography of *Evangelion*; however that is a decision that rests with the film's producers," Taylor said. One thing that was confirmed was that due to previous commitments, Weta co-founder Peter Jackson (director of *Lord of the Rings*) will not be a part of this production.

ADV says they're following an "aggressive" timetable for production. Given that hot property *Spider-Man 2* started filming this April for a summer 2004 release, is it possible that *Evangelion* could be blasting away at audiences next year? Maybe Shinji and his EVA will show Spidey how it's done. ■ Trisha L. Sebastian

WHY WON'T MY SHOELACES STAY TIED?

LARGE AND IN CHARGE The massive EVA Unit-01 will get the space it deserves—the big screen.

LIVE AND KICKING

IS JAMES CAMERON WINNING THE LIVE-ACTION ANIME RACE?

HEAVEN SENT Alita takes a moment to pray for a reliable mechanic.

You're going to need more popcorn than you thought, because *Evangelion*'s not the only anime property to get a live-action movie deal. Here's an update, in order of how far long they seem to be...

BATTLE ANGEL ALITA: James Cameron (*Terminator 2*, *True Lies*) long ago acquired the rights to this post-apocalyptic manga—whose anime came to the US in 1993—but is finally talking about it now that his 3D IMAX film *Ghosts of the Abyss* is in the past.

"*Battle Angel Alita* is definitely in our production queue," Cameron told London's *Guardian Unlimited*. "It's a film that I'm going to be directing. And we'll probably do that in 3D, too."

"We've done a tremendous amount of design for the film and we're fine-tuning the script," Cameron further explained to *Hot Dog* magazine. "The manga is not internally consistent, meaning sometimes Alita looks like one thing and has one set of abilities, and at the whim of [creator Yukito] Kishiro he'll go off on a whole different tangent. It needs to be fused and focused and given a centralized storyline. But the character will be very, very true to Alita as she is in the manga."

NINJA SCROLL: Are mystical ninjas from feudal Japan getting closer to the big screen? You bet. "The script has been completed," says Hannah Schmeider of Threshold Entertainment (producers of *Mortal Kombat Annihilation*). If youre good with a sword, they're looking for talent next.

LUPIN THE 3RD: Lock up your daughters—the master thief is coming! Chet Thomas (*Minority Report*), president of production for Whitelight Productions says the crime caper's entered development. "We're deciding what the story's going to be," he revealed. "Lupin's already stolen a lot of stuff; what can he steal next?"

LONE WOLF AND CUB: *Variety* reported in May that Darren Aronofsky (*Pi*) has been chosen to be the direct an "updated" version of the 17th century story of a samurai's quest for revenge with his infant son, based on the famous manga. He'll oversee development of the film.

DRAGON BALL Z: Did this announcement go Super Saiyan too soon? A Fox 2000 spokesman says the contracts for Goku's battle-heavy adventures aren't yet signed. Effects giant ILM denied rumors of their being on board, and Fox refuted a story claiming they plan four films. We hope they doth protest too much. ■ TS with reporting by Jenny Peters

SPEEDLINES

ITTY BITS OF ANIME NEWS

INITIAL D

CARDS ON THE TABLE

Anime has invaded the Collectible Card Game world big time. Alderac is putting out *Initial D* later in 2003, and in September Score gives us a double deal with *Dragon Ball GT*—with more crazy villans and powers—and *Yu Yu Hakusho*, featuring spirit battles with demons!

THE HOUSE THAT GUNDAM BUILT

Bandai of Japan has built its own museum! Opening this month outside of Tokyo, the Bandai Museum will offer over 500 exhibits on its 50-year history. The top two floors of the eight-story building will be devoted to Gundam alone!

LICENSE, PLEASE

When the summer con season begins, companies announce license acquisitions for new shows like crazy. Here's just the beginning:

- **ADV** *Azumanga Daioh* features the daily adventures of a group of eccentric high school girls. *Final Fantasy Unlimited* is a new adventure in the vein of the blockbuster videogames. Finally, the director's cut of the final six episodes of *Evangelion* are due, which includes additional, never-before-seen footage!
- **BANDAI** In October's *Witch Hunter Robin*, Craft user Robin Sena works with her moody partner Amon to hunt down rogue magic users known as witches—but is Robin a witch herself?
- **PIONEER** Written by *Serial Experiments Lain* creator yoshitoshi ABe, *Haibane Renmei* explores the lives of a group of angel-like children who have no memory. *Mahoromatric: Something More Beautiful* is the second season to the famous robot-maid series.
- **SYNCH-POINT** The *Di Gi Charat* movie and *Leave it to Piyoko!* will be the first Di Gi Charat anime releases in the United States. The series is heavily anticipated, having been directed by the team responsible for *Excel Saga*.

■ Robert Bricken

AZUMANGA DAIOH

WITCH HUNTER ROBIN

PUMP IT UP!

Anime Soundtracks Invade America...Officially

CHI'S IT Listen to her legally

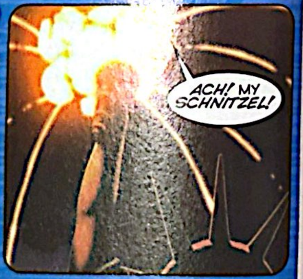
Anime fans can stop searching for black market Japanese soundtracks to their favorites shows and movies—Pioneer and ADV Films have decided to break into the anime music biz.

"As far as the worldwide market is concerned, the demand for anime soundtracks has been there for many years," explained Ken Wiatrek, director of marketing for ADV Films. "As anime fandom has grown here in America, so has the demand for everything anime, including soundtracks."

Instead of searching conventions and eBay for imported discs from Japan, fans can buy properly licensed American re-pressings. ADV's ADV Music label has recently released CDs for *Super Atragon* and *Cat Girl Nuku Nuku*, with discs for *Slayers* and *Nadesico* going to major music retailers soon. Pioneer's offerings include the official soundtracks for *Hellsing*, *Heat Guy J*, *Serial Experiment Lain* and more.

DEATH OF THE MONTH

OTTO LILLIENTHAL FROM [illegible] AD OF DIE'


ACH! MY SCHNITZEL!

Hey, you may be called the "German glider-king," but if you've got a rocket-powered glider and you still can't beat a librarian, you suck. Real-life historical figure Otto Lillienthal has been resurrected and turned evil by a sinister organization. When two super-powered secret agents, the paper-controlling Yomiko Readman and Nancy "Miss Deep" Makuhari give chase to the crazed German in a giant paper airplane, Otto leads them through the skyline of New York City. Yomiko sneaks onto his plane, deflecting his bullets with index cards to distract him. Miss Deep then fires a grappling hook from the Statue of Liberty into a wing of Otto's glider. The line reels the reincarnated geezer in, wrapping around the Statue's torch like tetherball of evil. Except that this tetherball crashes and explodes, setting Lady Liberty's torch on fire in a brilliant explosion and leaving poor Otto as cooked as a frankfurter. ■ Miguel A.E. Betita

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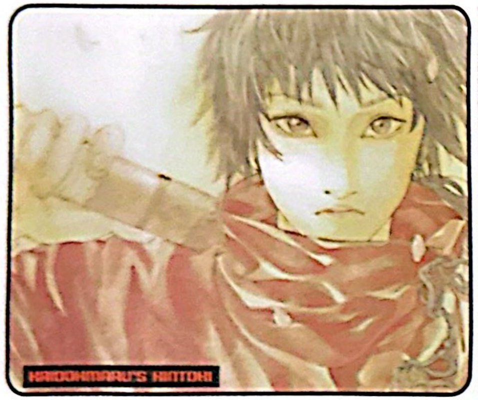
FEUDAL FURY

'Blood' Makers Go Really Retro with 'Kaidohmaru'


KAIDOHMARU'S KINTOKI

The last time the animation studio Production I.G. made their own anime in 2000, they turned out *Blood: the Last Vampire*, which was critically acclaimed for its beautiful animation. Three years later, Manga Entertainment brings you I.G.'s next solo project, *Kaidohmaru*—a tale of two warriors in feudal Japan who must protect the capital against a woman determined to destroy it—and them. We sat down with *Kaidohmaru*'s director, Kanji Wakabayashi, to hear his side of the folktale.

Is *Kaidohmaru* a totally new story? Or is it based on other material?

The story originally came from the inspiration of the old Japanese folklore tales of *Shuten Douji*. These stories have always been a great interest to me.

Can you summarize the story?

Kaidohmaru is a story about two young women, Kintoki and Ohnihime, who are cousins at war with each other for the simple reason that Ohnihime's father was responsible for Kintoki's father's death. A third character named Raiko enters Kintoki's life only to confuse matters, because Raiko falls in love with Kintoki, and Ohnihime is in love with Raiko. When Ohnihime sees them together, she gets jealous and tries to destroy them. It is a portrayal of love and hate, revenge and jealousy.

How were you chosen to be director?

I had the idea some time ago to create this movie and when I was working at Production I.G., I met Katsuji Morishita, then a producer for Sony. He then worked with me to take the idea to Sony's creative meetings; everyone liked it so Morishita-san and I decided to make it at Production I.G. where he now works as a producer.

Why are the colors in *Kaidohmaru* so washed out?

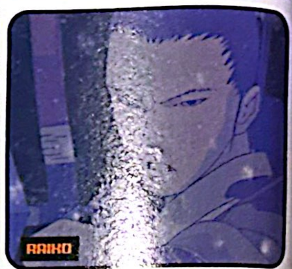
At the time we made *Kaidohmaru*, I.G. was producing *Jin-Roh* and *Blood*, both very dark tales with a very photorealistic approach. I had drawings that were done in pastel and I felt that representing the Heian era—about 800-1200 A.D.—on film would actually look better with a softer graphical look.

What did you want to achieve with *Kaidohmaru*?

I wanted to bring the realities of Japanese folklore to an audience who just see folklore as a tale of the past and nothing else. There are the dark sides to these tales and there is a lot to learn from them. I also wanted to say that nothing has really changed in human society, and the society today sometimes forgets that.

Who would win in a battle, Saya or Kintoki?

Well, I suppose Saya as she is a monster-killing, 200-year-old vampire! ■ RB


RAIKO

VITAL STATS

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT KANJI WAKABAYASHI

PLACE OF BIRTH Ayase-City, Kanagawa, near Yokohama

BASE OF OPERATIONS Musashino-City in Tokyo, located right in the center of many anime studios such as Ghibli, Mad House, and GAINAX

FIRST ANIME JOB Production Assistant for Crayon Shin-chan and Yarudora

FAVORITE ANIME *Tomorrow's Joe*, *Anne of Green Gables*, *Kouji Chushi Meirei*

FAVORITE LIVE-ACTION MOVIES *Taxi Driver*, *After Hours*, *The Shining*, *Ran* and *Tetsuo*

SPY KID "There was a United States Navy base near where I grew up, so I was always able to feel the American atmosphere very closely during my childhood." ■

KANJI CAN-DO Self-photo by Wakabayashi, holding his cat while attacked by a zebra.

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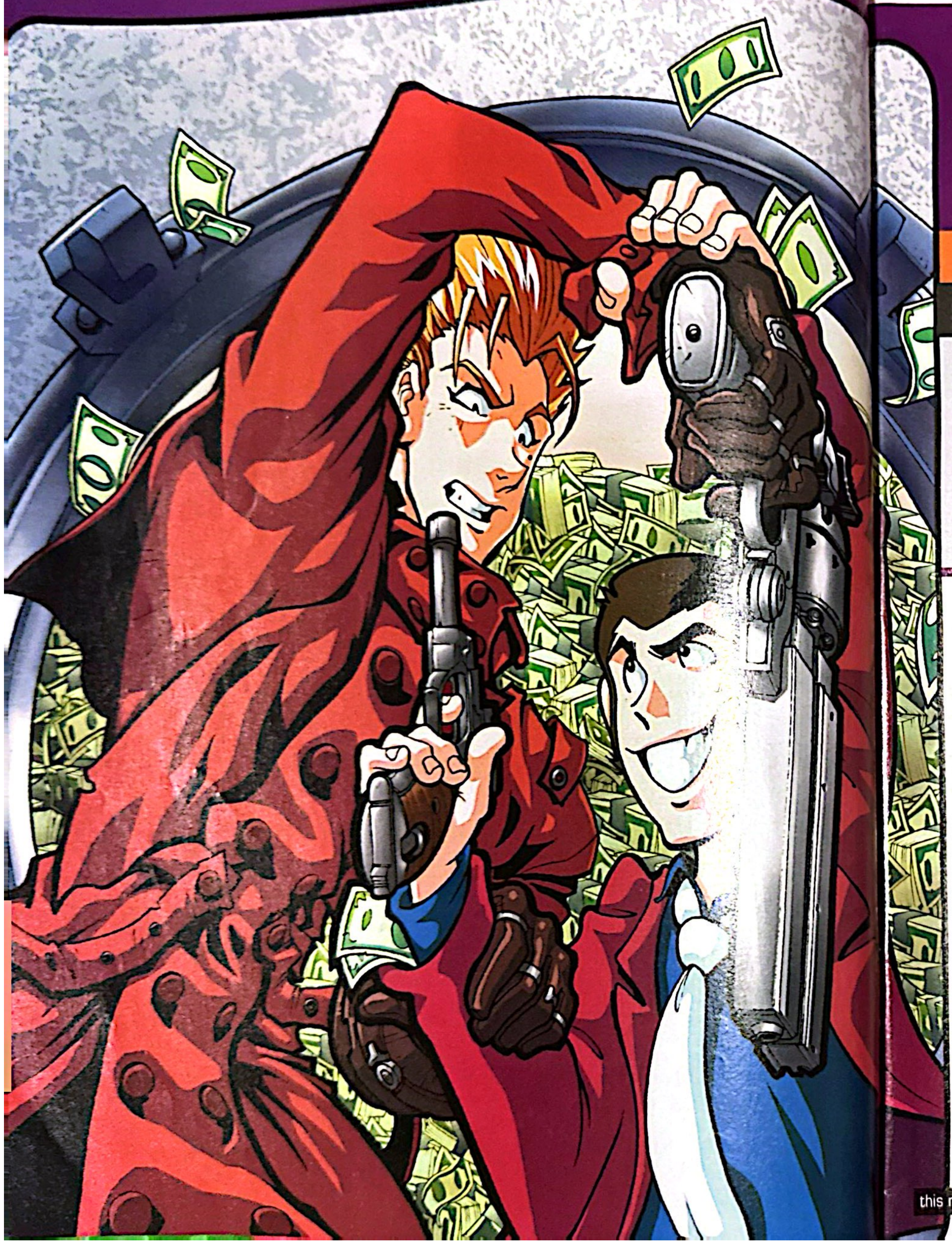


this month's battle drawn by SAM LOTFI

BY TOM ROOT

LAST MAN STANDING

A BATTLE YOU THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER SEE

LUPIN THE 3RD VS. VASH THE STAMPEDE

LUPIN THE 3RD		VASH
Early 30s	AGE	131
Walther P-38	WEAPON	.45 Colt Custom
The Wolf	NICKNAME	The Humanoid Typhoon
$10,000,000	BOUNTY	$$60,000,000,000
Pretty girls	ULTIMATE WEAKNESS	Donuts

LUPIN THE 3RD: Grandson of the famous gentleman thief Arsene Lupin, Lupin The 3rd is a modern-day Robin Hood; he steals from the rich and...well, yeah, that's pretty much it. Lupin and his running buddies Jigen and Goemon are forever pulling heists and eluding the clutches of obsessed Interpol agent Inspector Zenigata.

VASH THE STAMPEDE: He's the most wanted man in the universe, but Vash can't tell you anything about his life before the complete destruction of July City. As he atones for his past, he helps people when he can and tries not to kill anybody.

THE BATTLE BEGINS

"Thank you for coming," says the grandfatherly bank president, Mr. Graham. "Once this bandit hears the legendary Vash the Stampede is guarding my bank vault, he won't come within a hundred miles of here!" Mr. Graham pounds his fist on his desk enthusiastically.

"You flatter me, mister," Vash says, cheerily scarfing down his third pastry. "But tell me more about this bandit."

"This arrived in the mail," Mr. Graham says, producing a card signed "L." "It says by the end of the day today, my vault will be empty! You must stop him!"

From the other side of the room, they hear a *thumping* sound. Vash chortles. "Oh, I'm sure we can find a peaceful resolution to all this," he says. "Isn't that right...*Lupin?*"

Mr. Graham is shocked. "Are you accusing *me*...? That's absurd!" With a final *thump*, the office's closet door swings open and the bound and gagged form of Mr. Graham tumbles out, roaring with muffled rage.

The first Mr. Graham laughs sheepishly, then tears off his mask to reveal he is in fact Lupin! (Who didn't see that coming?) Vash draws his customized sidearm, but Lupin merely winks, throws a lever under the desk—and falls straight through the floor!

"The vault!" Vash says, rushing out of the office, yelling for the guards to open the bank vault. Inside, the vault it's clean as a whistle. There's not much doubt as to how the crime was committed—there's a gaping hole in the vault floor. Vash leaps down the hole to find himself in an underground railway tunnel. Off in the distance, riding a mine car overflowing with loot, is Lupin waving goodbye.

With astonishing speed, Vash draws and fires a volley of shots, knocking the wheels off the mine car, which goes careening into a support beam. The beam snaps, and suddenly there is a deafening rumble from above as other beams start snapping in a chain reaction. Lupin stuffs his pockets full of loot and runs for his life, Vash close behind, screaming with fear.

THE WINNAH:

Vash stands dejectedly outside the giant sinkhole that used to be a bank. "It's a total loss," says Meryl Stryfe of the Bernadelli Insurance Company. "And you say Lupin got away?" She shakes her head. "What'd you expect when you hire the Humanoid Typhoon?"

Are there any colossal anime matchups you'd like to see on these pages? Let us know at AnimeInsider@aol.com now!

BY TRISHA

A.I. FIVE

THE TOP 5 REASONS YOU'LL LOVE THIS SERIES

s-CRY-ed

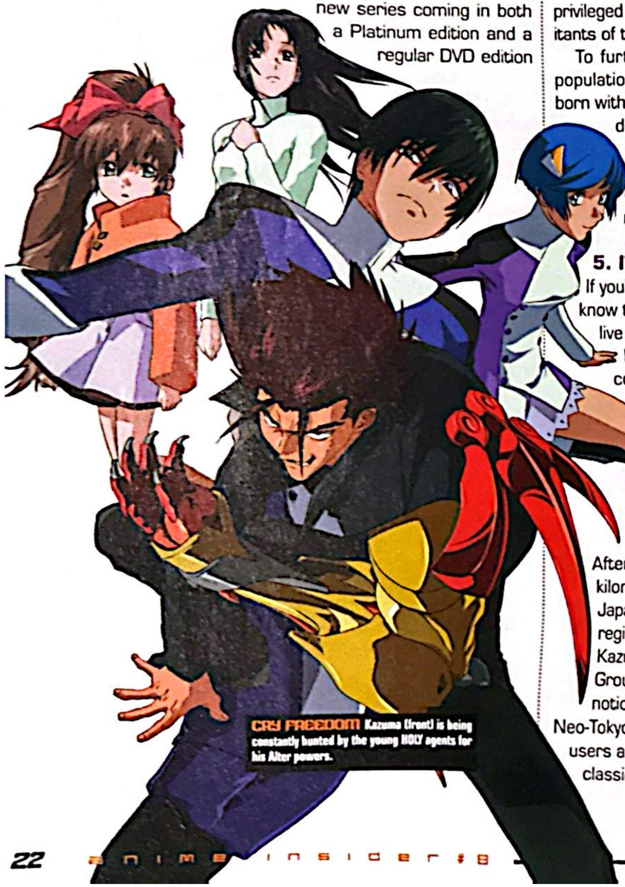
ALTERED HUMANS IN AN ALTERED JAPAN MAKE FOR CRAZY BATTLES

If you were born with a fantastic ability, what would you do with it? Hide it from the world? Or would you use it to its fullest potential?

Those are the questions posed by *s-CRY-ed*, Bandai's new series coming in both a Platinum edition and a regular DVD edition (July 1 and July 15 respectively), already released in manga form from TOKYOPOP. *s-CRY-ed* (so spelled because it's the title is a fragment of three Japanese words) takes us into the future, where Japan has been divided between the privileged humans on the mainland and the destitute inhabitants of the mysterious "Lost Ground."

To further complicate things, a small portion of the population on the Lost Ground called Alters have been born with fantastic abilities. They are policed—and hunted down—by HOLY, a mainland-based organization, who have Alters of their own.

You can just feel the conflict brewing, can't you? No? Not entirely convinced? Here are a few more reasons to watch *s-CRY-ed*.



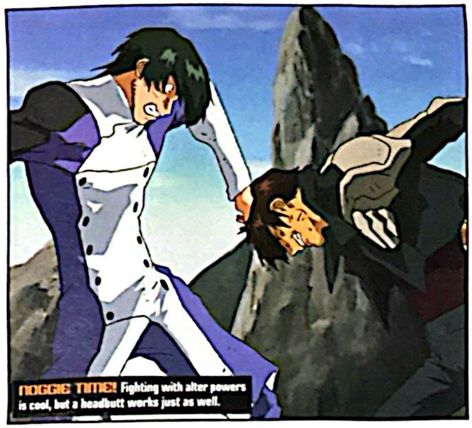
CRY FREEDOM! Kazuma (front) is being constantly hunted by the young HOLY agents for his Alter powers.

5. IT'S ANIME'S ANSWER TO THE X-MEN!

If you've seen any of the *X-Men* comics or movies, you know that mutants are born with special abilities, and live in a world that hates and fears them. Now you know the Alters too! These misfits have cool costumes, crazy superpowers and struggle with their place in the world, no matter if they're working for the good guys or the bad guys. The only thing missing is a cranky Canadian with a healing factor and movie deal.

4. BUT THEN, IT'S GOT SHADES OF 'AKIRA' TOO!

After a mysterious seismic event that forced a 30-kilometer area surrounding the Yokohama region of Japan several miles into the air (don't ask), the entire region fell into lawlessness and destitution. Our hero Kazuma and the other young inhabitants of the Lost Ground stick together as gangs, hoping not to be noticed by the authorities. Sound like life in *Akira*'s Neo-Tokyo? When you realize that HOLY arrests Alter-users and conducts experiments on 'em, you'll see the classic's coolest aspects revisited.



NOGGIE TIME! Fighting with alter powers is cool, but a headbutt works just as well.

3. EVERY ACTION-ADVENTURE NEEDS A LITTLE TROMBONE SOLO

In the midst of all the action, there are times when the series slows down to contemplate some very serious questions. Underscored with a solo trombone, the theme of man versus totalitarian society is explored several times. These scenes are a great contrast to the high-energy fights which are partially CG animation and partially traditional animation. Studio Sunrise, known for their stellar work on *Cowboy Bebop*, gets the credit this time around.

2. THE HEROINE WORKS FOR THE BAD GUYS!

When you first meet super-intelligent Mimori, she is a scientist who gets transferred to the Lost Ground to study Alters and their abilities, drawn by her memories of childhood acquaintance Ryuho (who is now working for HOLY). Upon meeting Kazuma for the first time, she starts to see things aren't exactly right with HOLY or her father's superiors at HOLD, the organization that spawned them. Wonder which way *her* loyalties will swing...

1. YOU'VE NEVER SEEN SUPER-POWERS LIKE THESE BEFORE!

When an Alter activates his or her ability, huge chunks of earth disappear and are molecularly recombined in the blink of an eye. Depending on the Alter user, different wackiness ensues. There's Straight Cougar, who revamps the car he's in to a super-speedster. George Tatsunami's "Big Magnum" power that creates very, very large gun with bullets the size of a beer keg—you've got to hear him yell "It's thick! It's hard! And it's coming to getcha!"

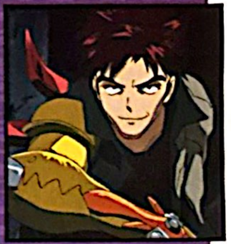
And then there's Asuka's multi-purpose Eternity Balls; alone they can control a human body, in concert, they can be a revolving shield or reformed as a sword. That's right—the guy's got deadly balls. We *love* this show!

Associate Editor Trisha Sebastian can alter fresh milk to sour, if you give her enough time.

ALTER EGOS

THEY'RE NOT YOUR TYPICAL SUPER HEROES

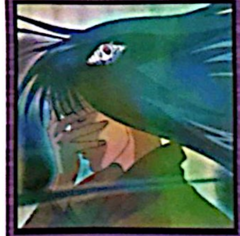
The downside to being born on the Lost Ground is that you're cut off from the rest of Japan. The upside is there's a chance that you'll be one of the lucky few who have Alter powers—that is, the power to reform material matter into a crazy power. But how exactly are they used and how do they stand up against other Alter powers?



KAZUMA

ALTER POWER: Creates multi-purpose, projectile-firing armor for his right arm.

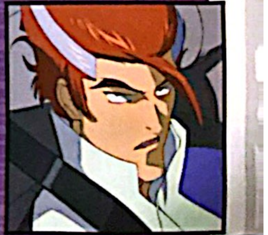
ANALYSIS: Being a Native Alter, he's not strictly trained in his abilities, which leaves him open to attacks by more experienced Alters. However, his stubbornness and perseverance help him win most fights.



AYASE

ALTER POWER: Turns matter into water

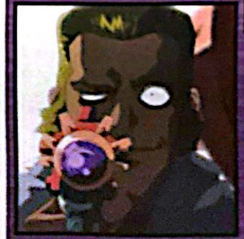
ANALYSIS: What seems like a weak power at first becomes a strong one when she uses it to short electrical systems from the inside. Becomes much stronger as the series progresses.



STRAIGHT COUGAR

ALTER POWER: Can make any moving vehicle go faster, with speeds in excess of 150 kilometers an hour.

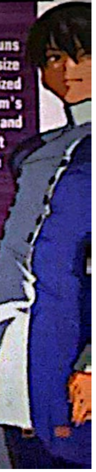
ANALYSIS: Reliance on a vehicle to power his Alter is a negative, limiting him to defense and long-range attacks.



BIG MAGNUM

ALTER POWER: Creates guns that fire bullets, ranging in size from hand-held to mecha-sized

ANALYSIS: Big Magnum's weakness is his arrogance and his reliance on straight offense, with no defensive capabilities.



RYUHO

ALTER POWER: Creates a robotic-like figure with prehensile monofilament whips

ANALYSIS: Ever since he manifested his Alter ability, Ryuho's honed it to a razor edge. He's also the top agent in HOLY, which means that anyone going up against him in a fight had better be just as good. ■ TS

Back to the BEACH

BOYS, BABES AND...GIANT 'BOTS? IT'S THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO THE BEST ANIME SUMMER YET!

BY THE A.I. STAFF

The heat is on and the fireballs are brighter than ever!

Well, at least our favorite fireball—the sun—is bright, so that must mean it's summer! That's the time to beat a watermelon open with a bat, peek through the fence at robots in bathing suits and spend a fortune at anime cons!

With so much to do, thank the kami that *Anime Insider* is here to run your lives. We'll show you the craziest anime summer vacations ever, where to take your road trip and what to listen to while the warm breeze is blowing through your spiky hair.

So take your pants off and put your bathing suits on, brave otakus—your summer has just begun!

SPLISH SPLASH! The ladies of *Love Hina* think the water's fine. Come on in!

SHOWS AND CONS

WHEN IT'S WARM, ANIME FANS TRAVEL IN HERDS

ANIME EXPO

Anaheim Convention Center, Calif., July 3-6

THE BIG DEAL: Declare your independence at the U.S.'s largest convention! *Yu-Gi-Oh!* director Goro Taniguchi will be making his North American convention debut, as will manga artist Koshi Rikudo, creator of *Excel Saga*.

DON'T MISS: The *Anime Insider* booth! We'll see you there!

MORE INFO: http://www.anime-expo.org/

BOY STUFF

METROCON

Crowne Plaza Tampa, Fla., July 18 to 20

THE BIG DEAL: What started as a large close-knit online community morphed into Tampa's first anime convention.

DON'T MISS: Dance the night away at the Final Fantasy Ball, where in-character costumers and other surprises await!

MORE INFO: http://www.animemetro.com/metroconventions/control.cfm

ANIME FESTIVAL ORLANDO

The Wyndham Orlando Resort, Orlando, Fla., Aug.1-3

COSPLAY

THE BIG DEAL: This fourth-year convention is the only place you can get voice actor Wendee Lee (*Cowboy Bebop*, Faye Valentine) to sign your swag.

DON'T MISS: You'll be able to watch anime music videos 24 hours a day on the in-room hotel TV channel.

MORE INFO: http://www.anime.jyu.fi/~fleggett/afo/

OTAKON

Baltimore Convention Center, Baltimore, Md., Aug 8-10

THE BIG DEAL: The East Coast's largest convention, Otakon is so popular that the makers of *Metal Gear Solid* immortalized its name in their game. Their kid-friendly "Otachan" programs makes this con the one to bring the whole family to.

DON'T MISS: The search is on for the greatest karaoke singer in the contest known as "Otaku Idol!"

MORE INFO: http://www.otakon.com/

WIZARD WORLD CHICAGO

Stevens Convention Center, Rosemont, Il., Aug 8-10

THE BIG DEAL: Over 45,000 con-goers, and the dealer's to empty all their pockets.

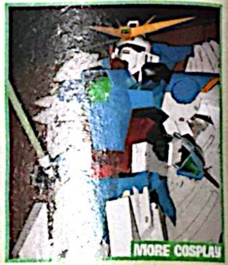
DON'T MISS: Our first-ever Cosplay Masquerade, with prizes to boot!

MORE INFO: http://www.wizarduniverse.com/conventions/

BIG APPLE ANIME FEST

Times Square, New York, N.Y., Aug. 29-31

THE BIG DEAL: When you combine the activities of a convention with the splendor of a film festival, you get the Big Apple Anime Fest.


MORE COSPLAY

DON'T MISS: Racing enthusiasts rejoice! TOKYOPOP and Mitsubishi Motors are sponsoring the world premiere of *Initial D: The Movie*.

MORE INFO: http://www.bigappleanimefest.com/index.cfm

ANIMEFEST

Hotel Inter-Continental
Dallas, Dallas, Tex., Aug. 29-Sept. 1

THE BIG DEAL: Thanks to the Labor [illegible]eekend, you can spend four days gorging on anime.

DON'T MISS: Plunge into the live act[illegible]le-playing game known as Mangamania.

MORE INFO: http://www.animefest.c[illegible]F2003/

■ **TRISHA L. SEBASTIAN**

SUMMER SNACK

MOCHI ICE CREAM are tasty rice cakes made with ice cream filling! Comes in green tea, vanilla, red bean and strawberry!

I SURRENDER!
DRINK WATER!

CONVENTION SURVIVOR

A FEW TIPS TO KEEP COOL...AND ALIVE.

CASH FLOW—Make sure you show up with a shopping list. You don't want to blow your dough when something you wanted more is in the next booth.

RIGHT ON SCHEDULE—Get a con guide and plan out your schedule up front. It's the only way not to miss something cool.

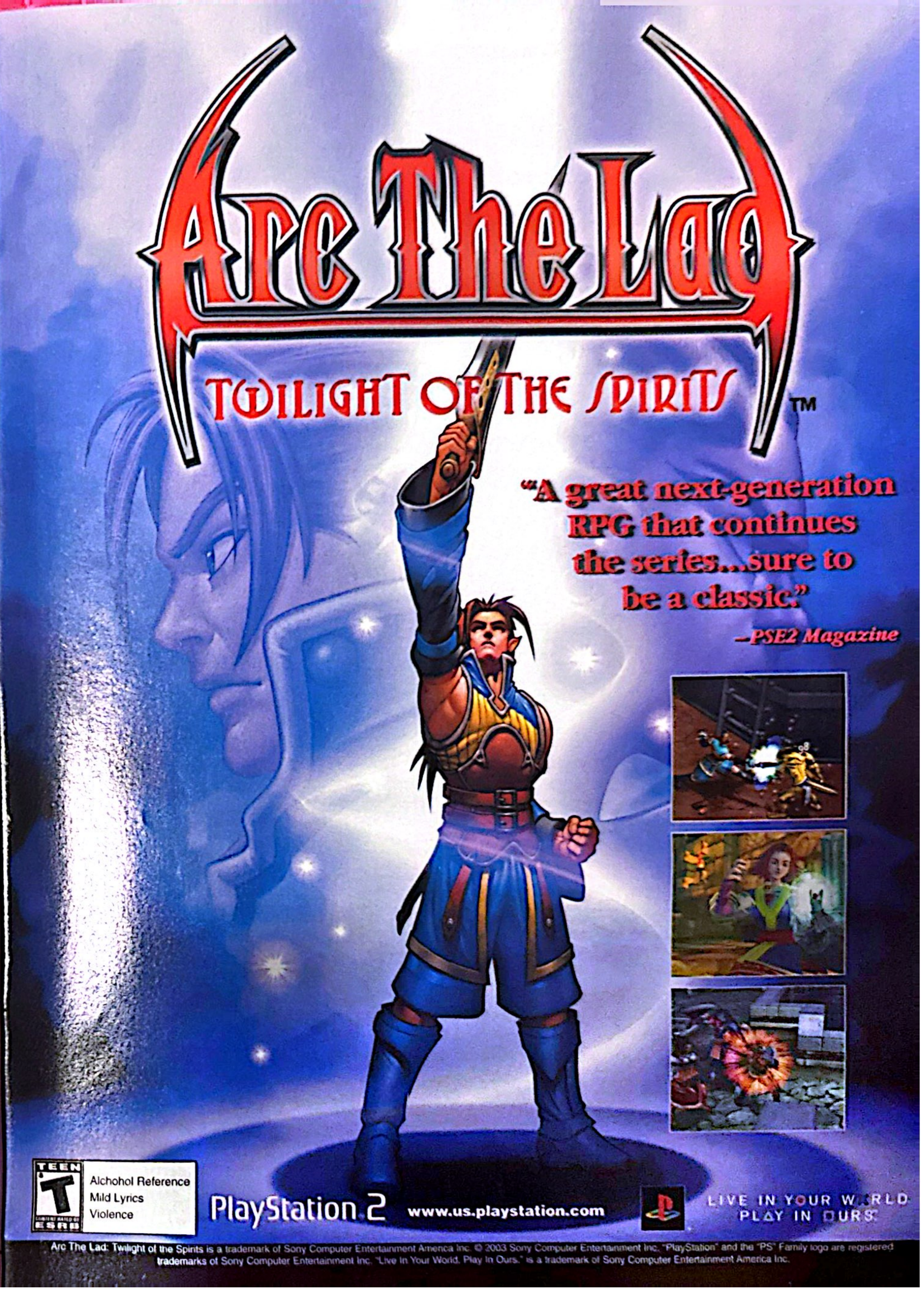
HEARTBREAK HOTEL—Pay your hotel bill in advance, in case you max your credit cards out at the show.

VOLUNTARY SERVITUDE—Can't pay for a badge? Volunteer workers get free admission to show events!

EMERGENCY COSPLAY KIT—Keep masking tape, scissors, thread and needles on you for on-the-spot repairs.

WATER OF LIFE—Cons, especially panel rooms, get hot and crowded. Passing out is a real danger, so drink plenty of water.

■ **TLS**



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TO DO

USE THE CHECKLIST, STUPID! OR YOU'LL FORGET!

WATCH THESE DVDs

- ☐ COWBOY BEBOP THE MOVIE (Columbia Tristar)–Finally, more Bebop to groove to.
- ☐ PRETTY SOLDIER SAILOR MOON (ADV)–Finally, the uncensored Season 1 arrives!
- ☐ S-CRY-ED (Bandai)–Pure anime action in the post-apocalypse.

READ THIS MANGA

- ☐ ONE PIECE VOL. 1: ROMANCE DAWN (Viz)–Pirates, treasure, lunatics and straw hats equal best manga ever.
- ☐ VISION OF ESCAFLOWNE VOL. 1 (TOKYOPOP)–Schoolgirl Hitomi is a fantasy world's savior.
- ☐ CANNON GOD EXAXXION: STAGE 2 (Dark Horse)–Mecha, guns and girls against alien overlords.

CATCH THESE FLICKS

- ☐ SAKURA WARS (Pioneer)–Lovely ladies defend Paris with steam-powered robots.
- ☐ JUNKERS, COME HERE (Bandai)–Can a girl and her dog save a marriage?
- ☐ INITIAL D: THE MOVIE (TOKYOPOP)–The hit races to the Big Apple Anime Fest.

PLAY THESE GAMES

- ☐ SOUL CALIBUR II (Namco)–The ultimate fighting game returns.
- ☐ APE ESCAPE 2 (Ubi Soft)–Catching monkeys is best way to spend your day.
- ☐ UNLIMITED: SAGA (Square Enix)–An RPG right out of your Art History class.

TUNE OUT TO THESE SOUNDTRACKS

- ☐ SERIAL EXPERIMENT LAIN OST (Pioneer)–Electronica for all moods, especially sad.
- ☐ NADESICO THE MOVIE (ADV)–Join the good spaceship with this rousing score.
- ☐ HELLSING OST (Pioneer)–Dark, heavy metal funk for fighting the undead.

ROAD TRIP

DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO THIS SUMMER? PACK YOUR BAGS AND LEAVE THE PLANNING TO US AS WE TAKE YOU ON A MAGICAL ANIME-THEMED VACATION ACROSS THE UNITED STATES AND BEYOND.

THE SONY METREON IN SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF. (left)
The one-of-a-kind Action Theater shows anime on three large screens so there's no bad seat in the house. On your way out, give the lifesize replica model of Amuro Ray's RX-78 Gundam head a smooch on the nose for good luck.

STUDIO GHIBLI MUSEUM IN MITAKA, TOKYO, JAPAN
Dedicated to the works of Studio Ghibli, there's a full-sized catbus from *Totoro* as well as a theater and other treats. All visitors get a commemorative ticket which includes three frames from an actual Ghibli film.

ANIME NATION IN TAMPA BAY, FLA.
One of the largest online anime retailers now has a brick-and-mortar store. With wall-to-wall merchandise, you're sure to find everything you need to commemorate your vacation.

BEAN BANDIT IN COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO.
Bean Bandit is a professional driver whose skills confound even the best Chicago cops. Bean Bandit is also a Mexican restaurant. Hey, you've got to eat somewhere on this trip.

TOKYO TOWER IN TOKYO, JAPAN (right)
The world's highest free-standing steel tower is a perfect spot to gaze. Many anime battles (like *Sailor Moon* and *Magic Knight Rayearth*) have been fought at the Tower, which makes it a "must-see" spot for any anime fan.

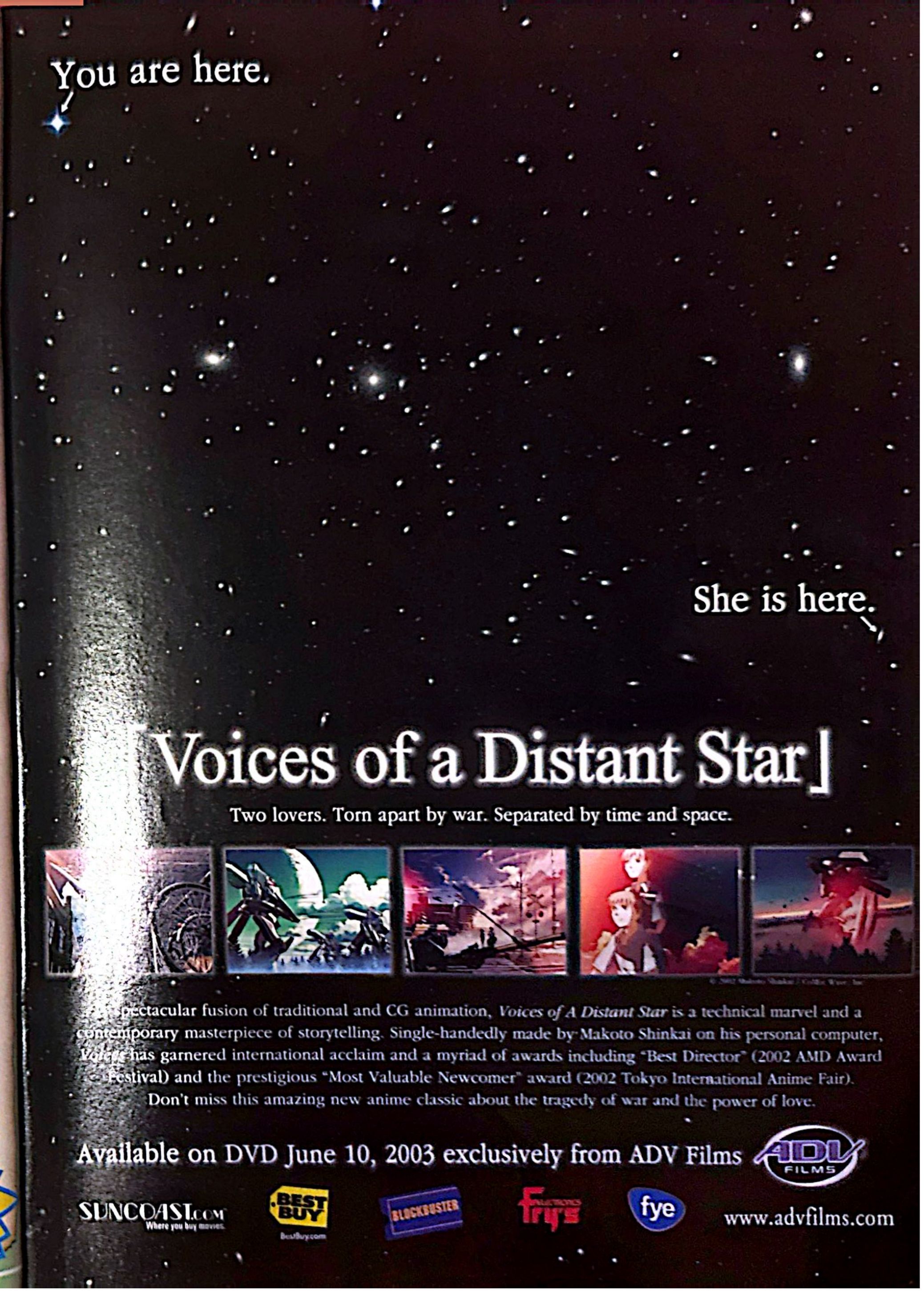
Have an interesting vacation? Send us your pictures [illegible] your name and the location and we'll publish them in a future issue. [illegible] get bonus points if you took *Anime Insider* with you! ■ **TLS**

SOUNDS OF SUMMER

WHAT TO BURN ONTO YOUR ROAD TRIP MIX CD

LUPIN III '80—The epitome of hip hop-jazz cool. (*Lupin the 3rd* [illegible] Club Mix)
NOMAD SOUL—The perfect driving song. (*Macross Plus* OST 1)
JA JA UMA SASENAIDE—Catchy and bouncy. (*Ranma 1/2* OST Vol. [illegible])
BAD DOG, NO BISCUIT—A cool song, made cooler. (*Cowboy Bebop Music for Freelance*)
ROGOSUNAKI WORLD—Blues-rock vampire-hunting hepness. (*Hellsing* OST)
RAIN—Haunting and dramatic. (*Cowboy Bebop* OST Vol. 1)
READ OR DIE THEME—Full of new adventures. (*Read or Die* OST)
PHILOSOPHY IN A TEA CUP—Lite jazz meets electronica. (*Trigun Spicy Stewed Donut*)
SALVA NOS—A get up and groove song. (*Noir* Original OST Vol. 1)
MY HEART IIDASENAI—Sweet and fun. (*Ah! My Goddess*)
TENSHI NO YUBIKIRI—A song for rockin' lovers. (*Kareshi Kanojo no Jijyo* Act 1.0)
FLY ME TO THE MOON (ACID BOSSA TV SIZE VERSION)—A lounge on the beach. (EVANGELION OST 3) ■ **TLS**

SUMMER SNACK
Melting ice cream is a pain, so how about one that's freeze dried solid? Thanks Japan, we love CAPURICO ICE CREAM COOKIE CONES!



You are here.

She is here.

Voices of a Distant Star

Two lovers. Torn apart by war. Separated by time and space.

© 2002 Makoto Shinkai / CoMix Wave, Inc.

A spectacular fusion of traditional and CG animation, *Voices of A Distant Star* is a technical marvel and a contemporary masterpiece of storytelling. Single-handedly made by Makoto Shinkai on his personal computer, *Voices* has garnered international acclaim and a myriad of awards including "Best Director" (2002 AMD Award Festival) and the prestigious "Most Valuable Newcomer" award (2002 Tokyo International Anime Fair). Don't miss this amazing new anime classic about the tragedy of war and the power of love.

Available on DVD June 10, 2003 exclusively from ADV Films

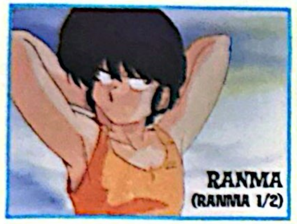
SUNCOAST.COM Where you buy movies. BEST BUY BestBuy.com BLOCKBUSTER Fry's ELECTRONICS fye www.advfilms.com

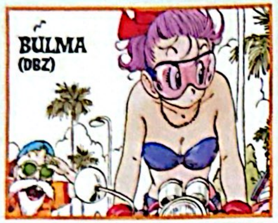
AND NOW... THE SWIMSUIT COMPETITION

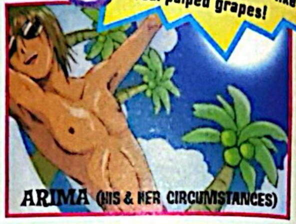
SUMMER SNACK

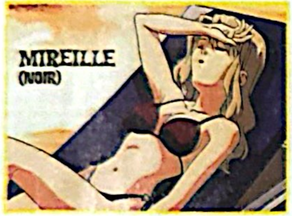
A great-tasting drink (endorsed by *Gundam Wing*'s Heero Yuy!), DAYBABY JELLY GRAPE DRINK tastes—and feels—like the real pulped grapes!

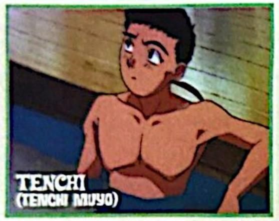
WHAT'S THE REAL POINT OF SUMMER? SWIMSUITS. MOSTLY NEKKID PEOPLE IN SWIMSUITS. LIKE THE PEEPS BELOW! HEAD TO WWW.ANIME-INSIDER.COM AND VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITE!

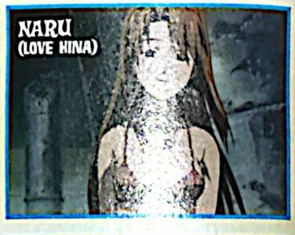


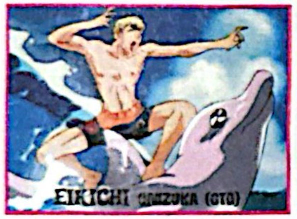


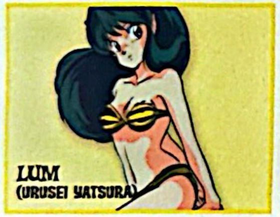


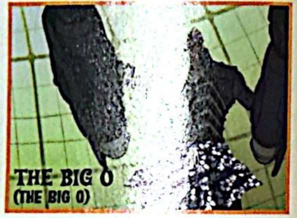












SUMMERS GONE WILD!

YOU WON'T BELIEVE HOW FAR THESE VACATIONERS ARE WILLING TO GO!

BRIDAL BATTLE ROYALE! In, a summer sail on Kuno's luxury yacht turns into a fight for survival as the girls are kidnapped by Prince Tomo and forced to wear skimpy outfits in a bridal competition! (RANMA 1/2: NIHAO, MY CONCUBINE, VIZ)

BATH HOUSE DEMON INVASION! Going to the hot springs is a typical Japanese getaway—but when Tenchi and his ladies go, it starts with a birthday suit fight over Tenchi's affections, and then the Water Demon comes to have his say! (TENCHI MUYO!, PIONEER)

NO BOYS ALLOWED—EVER! In an attempt to increase ratings, there are absolutely no guys shown on-screen in the eighth episode at all. But there are tons of girls in swimsuits lounging around the local pool and an orphaned deadly assassin girl. Everybody wins! (EXCEL SAGA, ADV)

THE WATERMELON GOD'S REVENGE! In Japan, it's a traditional summer practice to play a game where you blindfold yourself and hit a watermelon, like a piñata. But when Ataru does it, he angers a bitchy watermelon god who chases him and the gang around the beach, threatening death, but only spitting watermelon seeds at them. (URUSEI YATSURA, ANIMEIGO) ■ TLS

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UTENA
THE BLACK ROSE SAGA
DVD COLLECTION

"A TRIUMPH"
Animerica

Limited Edition Embossed Packaging while supplies last!
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Descendants of Darkness: Tarot Curse
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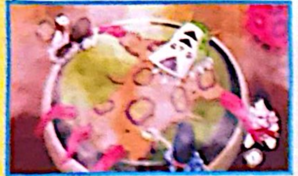
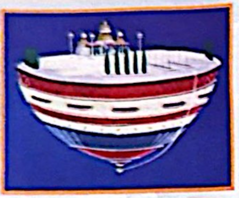
DREAM VACATION!

ANIME'S GOT SOME EXOTIC LOCALES, SO WHENEVER THEY FIGURE OUT THE MACHINE THAT CAN STICK US IN CARTOONS, THIS IS WHERE WE'LL BE SPENDING OUR SUMMER VACATION!



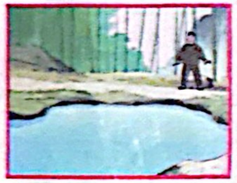
GET SPIRITUALLY CLEAN

Everybody likes to be clean, and there's no better place to do than Yubaba's bathhouse. Be pampered by the diligent staff, enjoy the bountiful food, and save up your gold for the finest scented bath water! **(SPIRITED AWAY)**



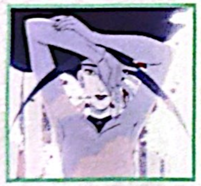
THE VIEW FROM THE TOP

People love checking out the view from the top of the Empire State Building...so what about Kami's lookout? Situated on top of Korin's Tower, it looks out over most of the Eastern hemisphere. Hope the weather's good! **(DRAGON BALL Z)**



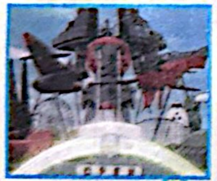
WATER HAZARDS

Maybe it's not the smartest idea to visit the Jusenkyo Springs, but it's still an absolute must. Sure, falling into the countless springs curses you into turning into something (e.g., a girl, a panda, a pig, a cat, etc.) when cold water douses you, but some people might dig it... **(RANMA 1/2)**



MACROSS THE UNIVERSE

If you see only one concert this year, see Sharon Apple. The mega-pop star/artificial intelligence redefines pop music with her techno-pop beats; plus she has the most amazing light/fully-dimensional hologram show in the galaxy. **(MACROSS PLUS)**



BEMUSEMENT PARK

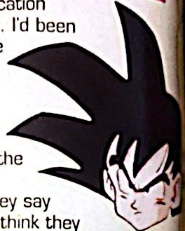
No otaku vacation could possibly be complete without ending up in Otakuland theme park! Situated around a gargantuan mecha (which looks suspiciously like a cross between *Macross's* SDF and Brave Raideen), Otakuland has anime rides, museums, stores, events and more! **(OTAKU NO VIDEO)**

SUMMER SNACK

Ya got two flavor packets and one pump. Add water, mush it around and pump, pump, pump to get sweet tastin' spaghetti strings! That's what BUDO is all about!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING THIS SUMMER?

"OH, WHAT I USUALLY DO—I'LL SAVE THE WORLD FROM SOME POWERFUL MENACE AND PROBABLY DIE. NOT NECESSARILY IN THAT ORDER, THOUGH." Goku, *Dragon Ball Z*



"Wait, it's summer vacation already? I had no idea. I'd been skipping school for the past two months—what a waste!"
Yusuke Urameshi, *Yu Yu Hakusho*

"I thought I'd head to the beach...if I could find some water. When they say desert planet, do you think they mean totally desert? Or just mostly?"
Vash the Stampede, *Trigun*

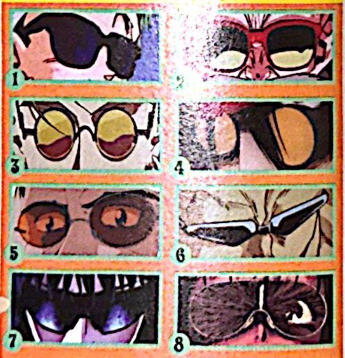
"I'm going to get the one thing that can't be stolen—the perfect tan."
Faye Valentine, *Cowboy Bebop*

"Actually, Faye's going to be working to pay back the 18 million woolongs she owes me."
Jet Black, *Cowboy Bebop*

"Are you kidding? I've missed so much homework chasing down parts of the Shikon jewel this last semester I'm going to need the summer to catch up!"
Kagome Higurashi, *Inu-Yasha*

NAME THESE SHADES

CAN YOU FIGURE OUT WHO'S FUTURE IS SO BRIGHT?



1. Great Saiyaman from *Dragon Ball Z*, 2. Master Roshi from DBZ, 3. Vash the Stampede from *Trigun*, 4. Arucard from *Hellsing*, 5. Gendo Ikari from *Evangelion*, 6. Toguro from *Yu Yu Hakusho*, 7. Motoko from *Ghost in the Shell* movie, 8. Rally from *Gunsmith Cats*

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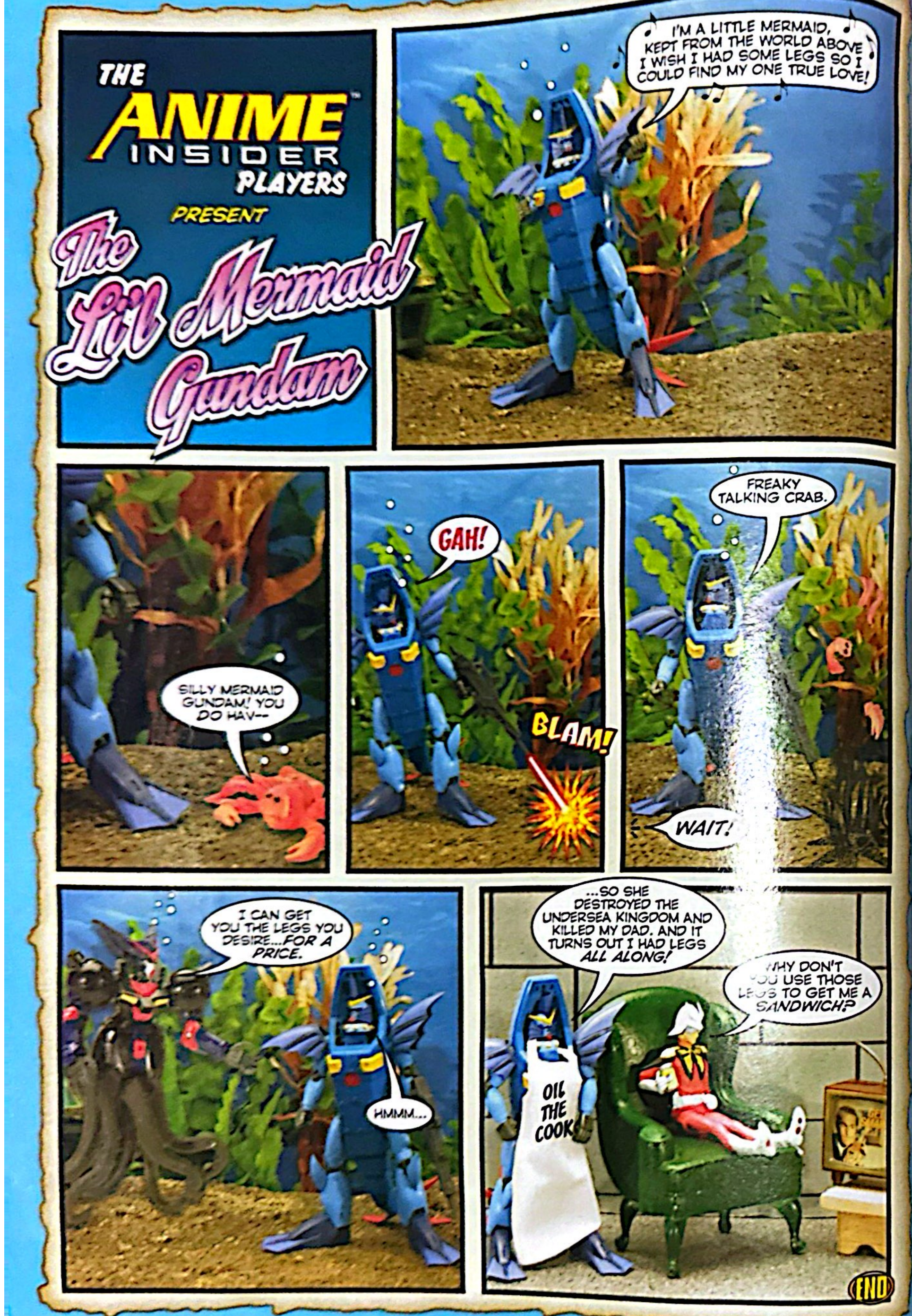
THE ANIME INSIDER PLAYERS PRESENT
The Li'l Mermaid Gundam
I'M A LITTLE MERMAID, KEPT FROM THE WORLD ABOVE I WISH I HAD SOME LEGS SO I COULD FIND MY ONE TRUE LOVE!
SILLY MERMAID GUNDAM! YOU DO HAV--
GAH!
BLAM!
FREAKY TALKING CRAB.
WAIT!
I CAN GET YOU THE LEGS YOU DESIRE...FOR A PRICE.
HMMM...
...SO SHE DESTROYED THE UNDERSEA KINGDOM AND KILLED MY DAD. AND IT TURNS OUT I HAD LEGS ALL ALONG!
WHY DON'T YOU USE THOSE LEGS TO GET ME A SANDWICH?
OIL THE COOK
END

"STUNNING AND BEAUTIFUL... ASTONISHING FROM START TO FINISH" - ANIME INSIDER

FROM THE CREATORS OF 'BLOOD THE LAST VAMPIRE'

KAI DOH MARU

"EXQUISITELY ANIMATED, BITTERSWEET AND POWERFUL - KAI DOH MARU WILL LEAVE YOU SPELLBOUND" - PLAY MAGAZINE

Set in the political intrigue of Japan's Heian era, explosive action, intertwined with a complex human drama, is brought to life in this atypical story of love, honor, jealousy and betrayal. Produced by the incomparable animation teams from Japan's IG Plus / Production IG (BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE / GHOST IN THE SHELL), this fully digital animation tour de force features elaborately drawn 3D backgrounds, showcasing a unique colorization scheme reminiscent of Japanese artwork from the period. **Kai Doh Maru** masterfully explores new and uncharted dimensions of anime, taking you back in time to a distant past, a beautiful and deadly world of lavish luxury, mind altering mysticism and bloody conflict.

Bonus program includes the **Kai Doh Maru - Production Report**, detailing the intricate and articulate creation of this remarkable film.

Available June 24th

KAI DOH MARU

[illegible] WAKABAYASHI EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS RYUZO SHIRAKAWA, MITSUHISA ISHIKAWA ORIGINAL CREATOR IG PLUS [illegible] VISUAL WORKS PRODUCER KATSUJI MORISHITA CHARACTER DESIGN SHO-U TAJIMA SCRIPT NOBUTOSHI TERADO [illegible] KYOUJI ASANO COLOR DESIGN NAGISA ABE 3D DIRECTOR MAKOTO ENDOH 2D WORKS TSUKASA KAKIZAKAI [illegible] MORI SOUND DIRECTOR KEIICHI MOMOSE MUSICAL SCORE YOSHIHIRO IKE TITLE MUSIC YUTAKA FUKUOKA ANIMATION PRODUCTION IG PLUS / PRODUCTION IG

[illegible] as leave no trace in the sky, so fragile, just like my being

"UNBELIEVABLY COOL... ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT" - ANIME INSIDER

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS NEVER PLANNED FOR *THIS*!

A sinister plot is afoot and only one schoolteacher - a special agent with an affinity for rare books, can stop it. She is Ms. Yomiko Readman - better known to her colleagues in Section A of Library Special Operations as "Agent Paper".

Someone is bent upon procuring a lost Beethoven manuscript and has enlisted a few of history's most extraordinary personalities, cloned from stolen DNA, to aid in the endeavor.

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PRODUCTION DESIGN BY KUNYUKI JINGUJI (*TRIGUN*)

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FOR SAFETY'S SAKE

PRESENTED BY ROBERT BRICKEN

WELCOME TO JUDOH CITY! HEAT GUY J AND THE SAFETY MANAGEMENT AGENCY ARE HERE TO PROTECT YOU!

Judoh is a wonderful, beautiful city— but sometimes, it's a dangerous city as well. Thank goodness we've got the only legal android in town working on our side!

We know that laws in our beloved city of the future—even the one forbidding androids in Judoh—can sometimes be broken. The police have their hands full with all the crimes that have already happened. That's why the City Safety Management Agency was created—to stop crimes *before* they're committed.

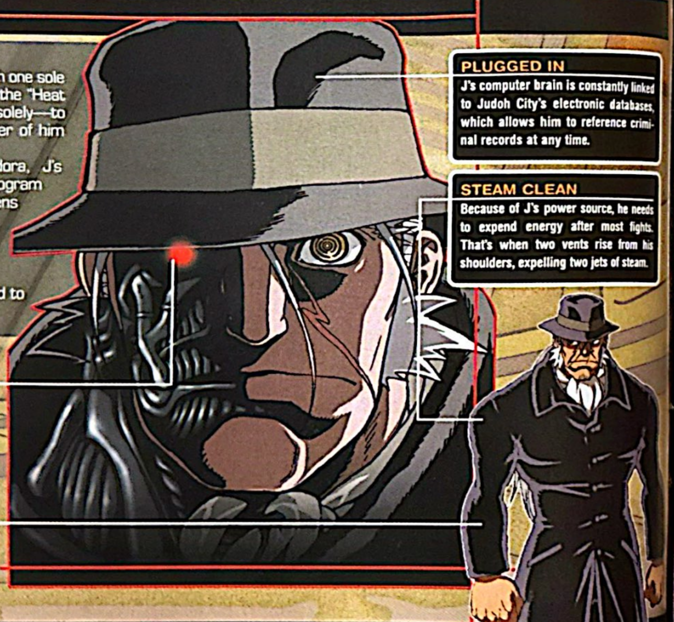
Our specialized team is working round-the-clock to keep our megalopolis safe for your loved ones. From the gargantuan skyscrapers to the shantytowns, from the hills to the harbor, we're out catching the criminals, so you can sleep soundly at night no matter where in our fair city you call home!

J

Androids aren't allowed to be in Judoh City, with one sole exception— and that's our J, often known as the "Heat Guy." He's programmed specifically—and solely—to stop crime in Judoh City, so there's no danger of him being used for the wrong purposes.

Dressed in his business wear and fedora, J's appearance—which is created by a mobile hologram projector—is supposed to put innocent citizens at ease. His electronic brain has been filled with additional knowledge about literature, art and morality, so he can have a scholarly discussion and know right from wrong.

Everything else about him has been designed to catch criminals.



PLUGGED IN

J's computer brain is constantly linked to Judoh City's electronic databases, which allows him to reference criminal records at any time.

STEAM CLEAN

Because of J's power source, he needs to expend energy after most fights. That's when two vents rise from his shoulders, expelling two jets of steam.

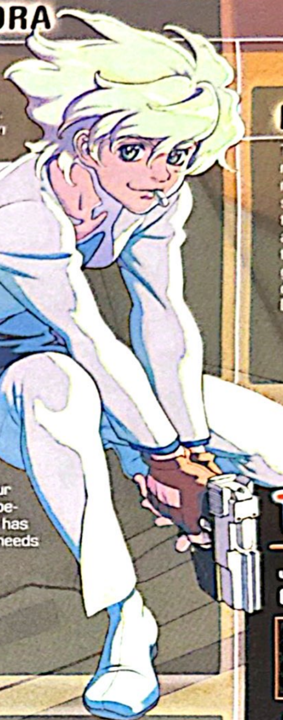
EYES PEELED

His scanning eyes see in both thermal and night-vision, as well as X-ray. Coupled with his database of knowledge, J can even tell what weapons a criminal is carrying, down to the caliber.

STRONG ARM

J is a top of the line android, with amped-up strength, agility and a steel endoskeleton strong enough to withstand bullets.

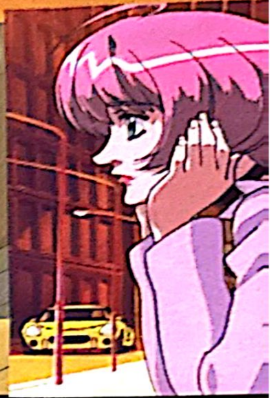
DAISUKE AURORA



He may look young, but Daisuke Aurora's no newbie when it comes to crime-fighting. After his dad was killed by an android, Daisuke has been determined to keep Judoh safe ...even if he has to work with an android to do it. Street-smart and a brilliant detective, Daisuke has hundreds of contacts in and around Judoh, which he uses to stop crimes before they're committed.

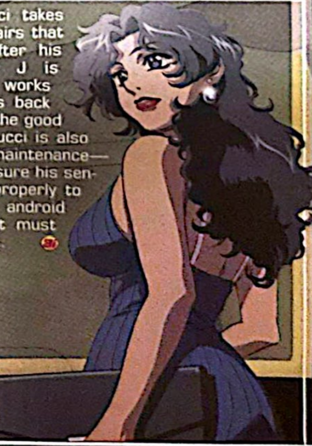
He may not have J's powers, but he does have an uncanny targeting ability. He's been known to hit the ankle of a moving truck with one shot! Daisuke may only be armed only with a gun and four bullets—three normal, and one special high explosive red—but he has yet to find a situation where he needs anything more.

KYOKO MILCHAN



The backbone of the Safety Management team, Kyoko also acts as its nerve center—filtering the reports of suspicious activity, keeping tabs on the mafia, giving J and Daisuke their assignments. Kyoko also has the thankless job of making sure Daisuke gets his reports in on time. She also dispenses the equipment for J and Daisuke—what little there is.

DR. ANTONIA BELLUCCI



[illegible] lovely Dr. Bellucci takes [illegible] of J and any repairs that [illegible] be necessary after his [illegible]ons. Whenever J is [illegible]ed, Dr. Bellucci works without sleep until J's back on the job, protecting the good folk of Judoh. Dr. Bellucci is also responsible for J's maintenance—everything for making sure his sensors are functioning properly to his programming. An android may be a tool, but it must stay in the right hands.

THE DANGER ZONES

JUDOH CITIZENS, WATCH OUT FOR THESE THREATS

ALTHOUGH THE CITY SAFETY MANAGEMENT AGENCY IS WORKING AROUND THE CLOCK, THERE ARE STILL DANGERS IN JUDOH. HERE ARE THE TOP FIVE PROBLEMS WE'VE VOWED TO STOP...FOR YOUR SAFETY.

ROGUE ANDROIDS

No androids are allowed in the city for safety reasons (except our J, or course). So when an android is smuggled in, they've likely been programmed for nothing good.

BEAST CRIMINALS

The worst criminals get surgically altered so that they have a wild animal's head, as a permanent punishment for their crimes. There have been a rash of prison break-outs lately, but we're determined to send them back to prison.

ILLEGAL PETROLEUM USE

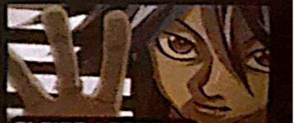
You might not have heard of petroleum, the former fuel source, but unfortunately some criminals have. They also know that petroleum can be used to make high-grade explosives.

WEIRD TRADING CARDS

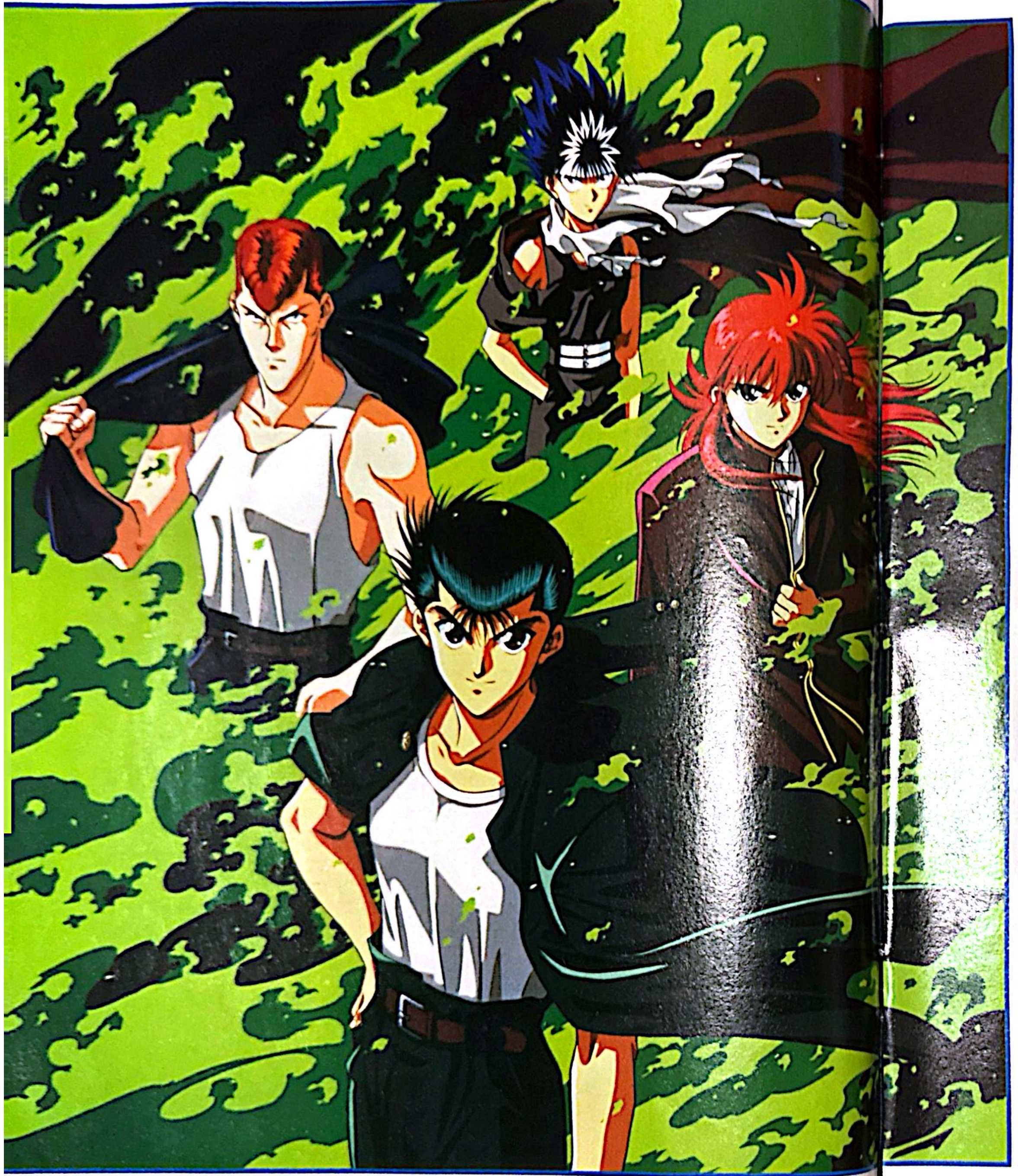
We don't know why this popular "Beauties of the City" trading card series has suddenly shown up in Judoh, but it seems pretty sketchy to us. Watch out for them, and be careful!

THE MAFIA

We won't try to pretend that the Mafia doesn't have a presence in our fair city. But we're determined to put all stop to organized crime, no matter the cost! Especially the vicious Leonelli family, headed by young psychopath Claire Leonelli. ■ RB



CLAIRE LEONELLI



HOW TO BE A SPIRIT DETECTIVE

Welcome to the 'Yu Yu Hakusho' Guide to Demon-Hunting—Now Get to Work!

By Robert L. Bricken, Ph.D.

Demons want to eat your soul.

Oh, don't freak out now—they've always wanted to, actually. But since you have very high Spirit Energy—the power necessary to defeat those demons—you've just been hired as a Spirit Detective. But what *is* a Spirit Detective, you wonder? That's what you'll discover in this handy textbook.

Being a Spirit Detective isn't like a regular job you might have had back in the Living World. For instance, you don't get paid. You will probably do a lot more fighting as a Spirit Detective than before (unless you were a professional boxer). You might even get killed by demons.

Being a Spirit Detective makes you special. Not just because you have those special powers, but because you get to know more. Think…how many of your friends know that there are countless monsters right outside their dimension, feverishly trying to break into the human world and devour their flesh? Not many, right? As a Spirit Detective, it'll be your job to make sure that your human friends don't know—and that they don't get eaten.

But wait—you don't even know who you work for, right? Or what these "powers" are? Well this text should explain everything. So come along, Detective!

VOCABULARY TO LEARN

Spirit Energy
Demon
Dark Tournament

GOALS FOR THIS CHAPTER

- Describe the three main Realms.
- List two good demons and two bad demons.
- Compare the two types of Spirit powers.

Opposite Picture
Spirit Detective Yusuke Urameshi and his companions.

Figure 1-1
The Spirit World

NOW YOU KNOW

There is a fourth world, called the Nether Realm, that's even more vicious than the Demon World. Because it's so terrible, it has been sealed away from all the other realms millennia ago.

Welcome to the Afterlife

As you've probably gathered by now, there's a lot more out there than just the **Living World**. Although regular humans are never aware of their existence, there are two other realms: The **Spirit World** and the **Demon World**. In this section, we take a look at each of them.

The Living World

This is where humans live, and it's probably the world you come from. The inhabitants of the Living World usually have no idea about the existence of the other worlds, and it's one of your jobs to keep it that way. That's because humans are very simple-minded creatures, and can't handle this sort of thing.

There are many ways to pass from the Living World into the worlds, but you need to have above average Spirit Energy (see section 3). Usually you can access the Spirit World by flying into the sky.

The Spirit World

This is best known of all the Realms, if only because it's the most easily accessed and because it's the safest! Koenma (see sidebar below) rules over most of the Spirit World, making it a reasonable facsimile of what humans call "Heaven." The River Styx divides the lands Koenma rules from the rest of the Spirit World.

On the other side of the river lies the not-so-nice portions of the Spirit World, such as the City of Ghosts and Apparitions, which is a prison where nasty demons and spirits are kept. Maze Castle also sits on the fringes of the Spirit World, and is home to the four evil Saint Beasts. These darker parts of the Spirit World usually connect to the Living World through dark underground places, like caves and basements.

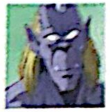
As a Spirit Detective, you'll work for the Spirit World, specifically under the orders of Koenma. Part of you job is to make sure both the Spirit World and the Living World are safe and sound.

The Demon World

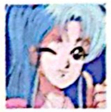
As bad as the bad parts of the Spirit World can get, the Demon World is even worse. There, Demons run unchecked to fulfill their dark, unspeakable schemes. Although most of the denizens of the Spirit World take on human shape, many of the Demon World's inhabitants look any variety of grotesque and hideous shapes—and so does the Demon. The Demon World has been sealed to prevent the demons from over running the Spirit and Living Worlds.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

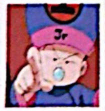
IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN THE SPIRIT WORLD



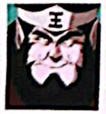
OGRE These guys assist Koenma with his administrative duties. Called Oni in Japanese, they're known by their horns and tiger-striped clothes.



BOTAN Botan leads all spirits from the Living World to the Spirit World. Her name is supposed to sound like "boatman," named after the ancient Greek myth that a boatman carried souls to the afterlife. CUTE BUT PUSHY



KOENMA Don't be fooled by his youthful looks; Koenma is actually hundreds of years old and your boss besides. You'll report directly to him, and he will give you your Spirit Detective assignments. UNCUTE BUT PUSHY



KING YAMA Huge and terrifying, King Yama is the absolute ruler of the Spirit World. However, he's so busy dealing with things that he's rarely seen, and leaves most of the Spirit World paperwork to his son, Koenma.

Know Your Enemies

As Spirit Detective, you'll spend most of your time fighting **Demons**, so it's time to learn a little about them. Demons come in all shapes and sizes, from looking just like a human to incredible bizarre and hideous monsters. Like humans, there can be good and bad demons; the less human they look, the more evil they probably are (although this is not an absolute rule).

Demons come with a variety of powers and strengths. Many demons are no more powerful than a regular human, while some could destroy mountains with a mere glance. Demons can take control over the four elements: fire, ice, air and earth. They can also have more bizarre powers, like over their body strength or make-up! While some demons have their particular weaknesses, the only sure way to beat them is to be stronger than they are.

Evil Demons feed on humans, and thus are constantly trying to enter the Living World. It is your duty to prevent them from killing any humans—or better still—prevent them from entering the Living World at all.

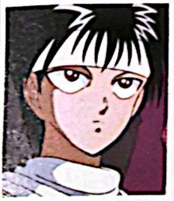
Figure 2-1
Various demons

DEMONS TO KNOW

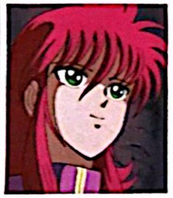
Some Will Watch Your Back and Some'll Stab You In It

GOOD DEMONS

KICKED?

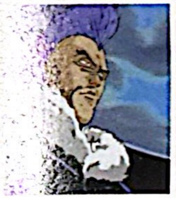


HIEI A small, brooding apparition with the power to control fire, incredible swordsmanship and a magical third eye called the "Jagan" which allows him to see hidden things. Once a criminal, Hiei is now considered reformed, but must be carefully watched. YES

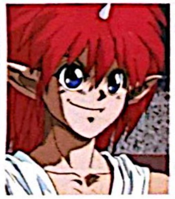


KURAMA Kurama is a fox-spirit, who is currently reformed and assisting the Spirit World in human form. He controls plant matter, and is very powerful when he wields his "Rose Whip." YES

BLEHBLEHBLEH

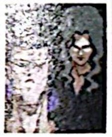


CHU Very human-looking, Chu may seem harmless, but he's an exceptional fighter—and a drunk. But the more he drinks, the more powerful he gets! OH, YEAH

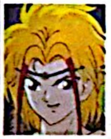


JIN A powerful Wind Master, with the ability to fly and create small tornadoes around his fists. Jin is not necessarily evil, but he enjoys nothing more than a good fight. YEP

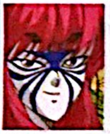
EVIL DEMONS



TOGURO BROS. A powerful duo, the larger brother can increase his strength to 100 times that of a regular human, while his brother can transform into fighting equipment, like a shield or sword. YESSIR!



SUZAKU The most powerful of the Four Saint Beasts, he and the other Three Beasts reside in Maze Castle. Suzaku has the power to split into seven different bodies, and each of them retain his original power! YES



RANDO A deceptive and evil demon, Rando has destroyed 99 fighting masters and absorbed their special technique, making him a dangerous demon indeed. YES

THE DARK TOURNAMENT

Once every 50 years, a demon-fighting tournament is held on Hanging Neck Island. Called the **Dark Tournament**, it is organized by rich, evil humans who gamble on the demon teams. Demons team up in eight groups of five, and fight each other in a variety of ways, including best three-of-five fights, a 3-on-3 battle royale, and a "Last Man Standing." The winning teams continue on until the finals, where if they win, they get their wishes granted to them.

There is always one underdog team that attends, decided by a boat ride free-for-all to the tournament. Fifty years ago, the winner of the boat ride and the tournament was a human team! Can you enter this year's Dark Tournament and win?

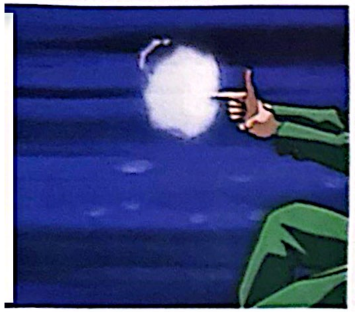


Figure 3-1
Spirit Gun

SPIRIT GUN RULZ

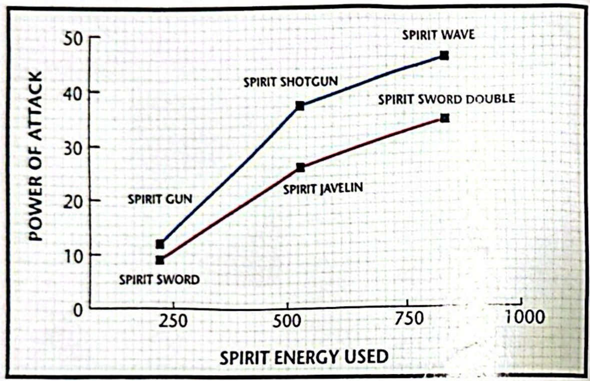
SKILL BUILDER

Take a milk carton and draw picture of a demon on it. Set the carton on a tree stump outside, and practice shooting it with your Spirit Gun. From how far away can you hit it?

Developing Your Spirit Moves

As stated earlier, the reason you were selected to be a Spirit Detective is because you have a great deal of **Spirit Energy**. By having more Spirit Energy than most people, you can travel between the World, as well as channel your Spirit Energy into attacks to defeat Demons.

There are two main ways to manifest your Spirit Energy (which is also sometimes called Ki); either as a **Spirit Gun** or a **Spirit Sword**. The Spirit Gun shoots your Spirit Energy from your forefinger to obliterate and enemy (lvl. 226). At the beginning, you may only be able to fire it once per day. However, as you train and fight, your Spirit Energy will increase, and you will be able to fire it more regularly.



If your Energy increases enough, you may be able to execute the **Spirit Shot**[illegible] 517), which is the equivalent of firing several dozen Spirit Guns at once. After that, the user [illegible] the incredible powerful **Spirit Wave** technique (lvl. 897)—which is like firing a Spiri[illegible] om the entire area of your body. This technique is so powerful, it can destroy the user if n[illegible]ly trained.

The Spirit Sword technique (lvl. 219) is simpler. As your Spirit Energy [illegible]s, it becomes possible to manipulate the sword's energy to lengthen like a pole, or shrink, t[illegible] like a javelin (lvl. 417) or even tie itself together! While these techniques are not more po[illegible] than the other, they do require more skill to use. When the Spirit Sword user's Energy is hi[illegible]ough, the user can manifest two swords, making the **Spirit Sword Double** technique (lvl. [illegible]).

EQUIPMENT CHECK

PSYCHIC SPY GLASS One of the first items given to a Spirit Detective, this allows the user to see through objects like walls and even clothing.

DEMON COMPASS A magical compass that points out exactly where Demons are by reading their Spirit Energy. Kind of useless in the Spirit World, but invaluable when hunting Demons in the Living World.

CONCENTRATION RING A ring that when worn multiplies the power of the Spirit Gun many, many times. However, the wearer will be drained of all his Spirit Energy when it is used.

COMMUNICATION MIRROR A small, compact mirror than allows two people to communicate over far distances, even across Realms! Also useful to making sure your hair is in place.

A Spirit Detective's Duties

Now that you know where you're at, who you're fighting and how you're fighting them, it's time to know all the things a Spirit Detective is expected to do.

- Apprehend or destroy all rogue demons.
- Rescue any good spirits as necessary.
- Prevent an invasion of the Living World by the Demon World.
- Recover any items stolen from the Spirit World.
- Prevent the Living World from learning of the other Worlds.
- Protect all members of the Living World from the denizens of the Spirit or Demon World.

HIEI'S JAGAN EYE

Of course, these are just the basic duties that a Spirit Detective must perform. There may be many other tasks that you willed be called upon to do. But you can rest assured, if Koenma asks you do to something, it will be something well within your capabilities as a Spirit Detective.

USING MATH

If two evil humans are summoning a Demon, and they spend three hours performing the incantation, how powerful will the demon be in terms of spirit energy? Try figuring it out without a calculator!

ANSWER: Two evil humans have a combined spirit energy of 8 x 1.5, times 3 incantation hours (3 x 14 spirit energy levels) = 504.

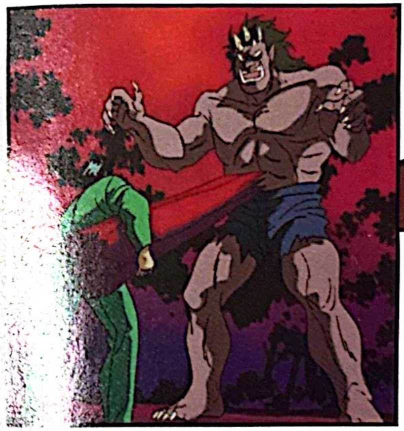


Figure 4-1
A Spirit Detective in action

Figure 4-2
Botan will be your guide

REVIEW

Answer all questions correctly to master the lesson.

1. Explain the ways to get to the Spirit World from the Living World.
2. Name two good demons and two bad demons.
3. Describe the progression of attacks from the Spirit Gun.
4. List five of your duties as a Spirit Detective. No peeking at the top of the page!

THINKING CRITICALLY

5. Which is better, the Spirit Gun or the Spirit Sword? Does it depend on how powerful the user is? Does the type of demon you're fighting make a difference? In a 500-word essay, state your position and explain your reasons.

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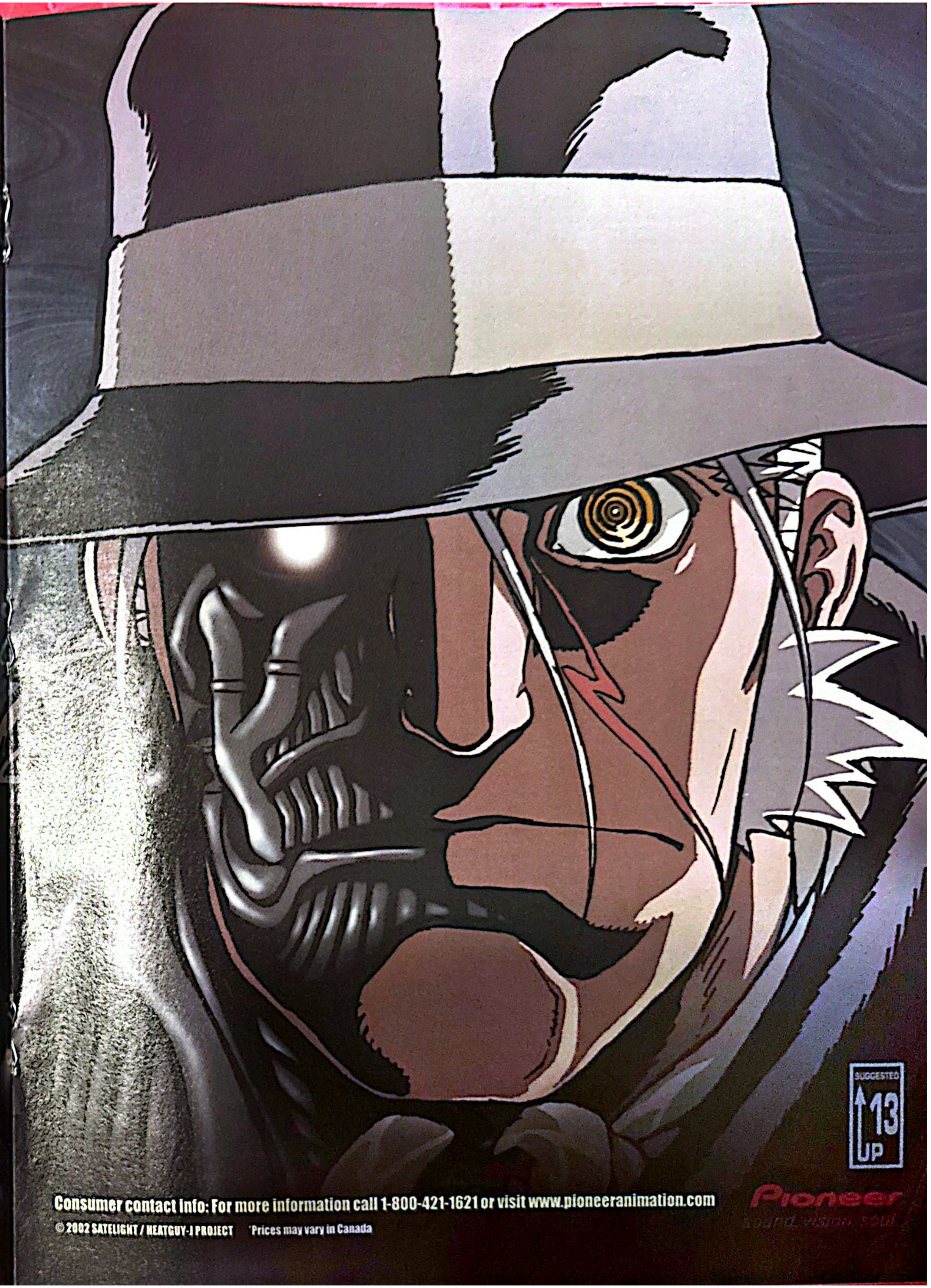

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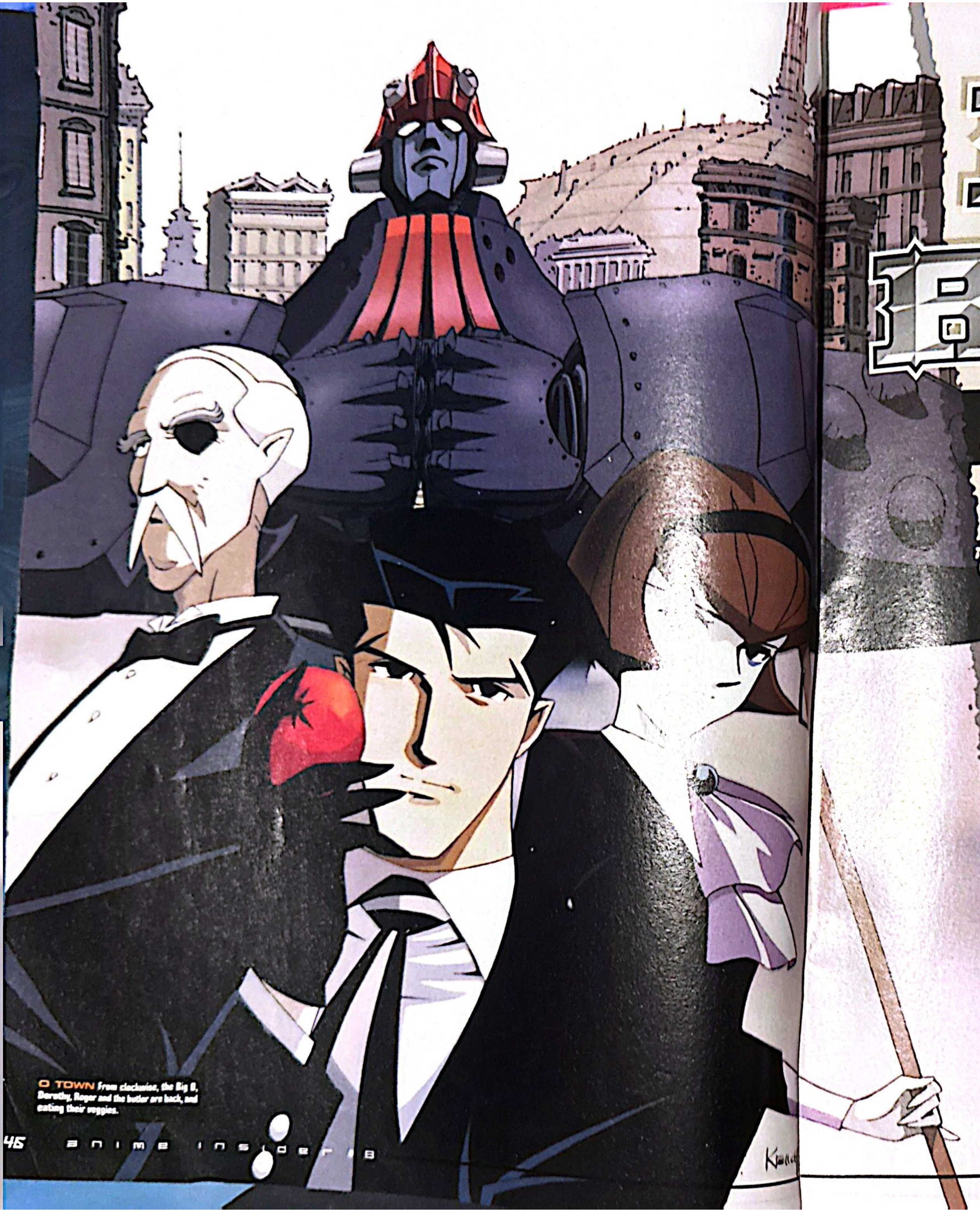


O TOWN From clockwise, the Big O, Dorothy, Roger and the butler are back, and eating their veggies.

By Zac Bertschy

ROBO RALLY

Because You Demanded It, America—'The Big O' Is Back.

THE EYES HAVE IT The Big O was mad when he watched his series end on a cliffhanger. He's feeling better now, though.

America is finally getting its way.

In anime, that is. Since *Astro Boy* first got shipped overseas in the 1960's, Japan has always ruled over which anime got produced and which didn't. America was an afterthought, a nice way to squeeze a little more profit out of an anime after its run. Until now.

American studios may have helped co-produce a few anime titles in the past, but for the first time America has demanded anime, and we've gotten it.

Make way for *The Big O 2*.

A BIG DEMAND

The original *Big O* series was no big deal in Japan. But while it was forgotten by audiences in the Pacific, the story of negotiator Roger Smith and his city-saving Megadeus robot negotiated big ratings in America when it started on Cartoon Network's Midnight Run in April of 2001.

But the *Big O*s big problem was that the series only lasted 13 episodes, not nearly enough for a full season, according to Cartoon Network creative director Sean Akins.

"We saw the end of the show and were like 'What? That's it?'" says Akins. "We all felt the show had serious potential, and it was a champ in the ratings arena. We wanted more, the audience obviously wanted more."

Thanks to Cartoon Network and Bandai, they're going to get more. But such a momentous event didn't come easy, though. First was getting Sunrise, the original Japanese producers of the *Big O*, to agree to the sequel.

"I can't even count all the meetings I had overseas," remembers Akins. "There were many, many dinners with representatives from both Bandai and Sunrise, before *The Big O 2* became a reality."

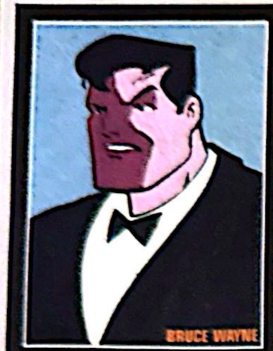
There were two factors that got Sunrise to change their minds. Mainly, it was the *Big O*s American success. "It did very well both on broadcast TV and DVD home video sales and toy sales," says Bandai marketing associate Jerry Chu.

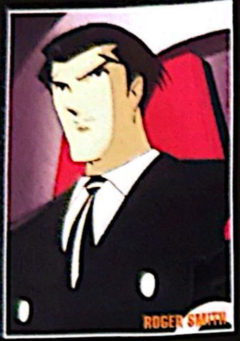
But more importantly, Japan has been slowly realizing potential of the American anime market. "In recent years, the Japanese animation industry has become increasingly aware of the overseas market, and is developing programming with this new market segment in mind," says Bandai's *Big O 2* producer Charles McCarter.

With those ideas in mind, Sunrise agreed. So on August 3rd, at 11p.m., the *Big O 2* will premiere on Cartoon Network's Adult Swim...because America demanded it. Says McCarter, "Without the support of the American fans and Cartoon Network, there would not be a *Big O 2*."

BATS IN THE BELFRY

BATMAN AND ROGER SMITH—SEPARATED AT BIRTH?


BRUCE WAYNE


ROGER SMITH

MONEY TALKS

Millionaire businessman Bruce Wayne spends his fortune on crime-fighting and raising a young, male ward. Ick.	**Millionaire negotiator Roger Smith spends his fortune on crime-fighting and raising a female android ward. Ick.**

WONDERFUL TOYS

Batman has an arsenal of cool gadgets, including a hi-tech boomerang that doubles as a grappling hook.	**Roger has an arsenal of cool gadgets, including a hi-tech lockpick that conforms to any lock.**

THE BUTLER DID IT

Batman's closest confidant is his trusty butler Alfred, who makes sure Wayne Manor runs like clockwork and that they never run out of Ho-Hos.	**Roger's closest confidant is his trusty butler Norman, who makes sure Smith's mansion runs like clockwork and that they never run out of Ring-Dings.**

SWEET RIDE

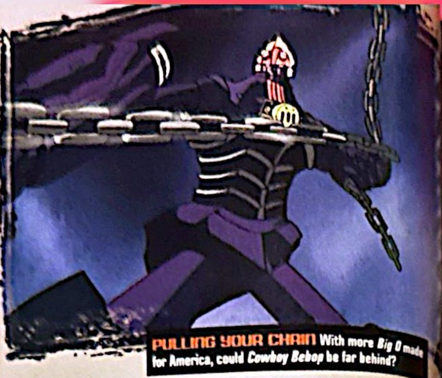
Bruce drives the Batmobile, a sleek-looking car loaded with gadgets like side-firing missiles.	**Roger drives The Big O, a giant robot with battlin' fists and deadly eye-beams. Batmobiles suck. ■** ZB

A BIGGER, BADDER O

Don't know what all the fuss is about? Don't worry, because Cartoon Network is re-broadcasting the original *Big O* series at midnight starting July 10.

The story is set in a place called Paradigm City. Forty years ago, a catastrophic event caused all the citizens to lose their memory. The city's denizens struggle to continue their daily lives, but villains plot to bring Paradigm City to its knees—usually with big, huge robots. Their only hope is Roger Smith, who fights crime as the pilot of The Big O, a "Megadeus" robot.

Lasting only 13 episodes, fans would have been clamoring for more even if *The Big O* didn't end of a cliff-hanger. The final episode ends quite abruptly: Roger and Dorothy enter the Big O to fight an onslaught of enemy robots. He shouts his battle-cry, "Big O: Showtime!" and the words "To be continued" show up, which was a big lie...until now.


PULLING YOUR CHAIN With more *Big O* made for America, could *Cowboy Bebop* be far behind?

In *The Big O 2*, all the questions get answered and the mysteries get solved. "If you're interested in what exactly was the event that caused Paradigm City to lose its memory 40 years ago, you'll know by the end of the series," promises McCarter. "The identity of Angel—the girl who seems to show up at just the right time all the time—will be revealed. There will be some surprise characters returning from the first season too."

But it won't all be plot—there'll be plenty of giant robot-on-robot action too. "There will be more Megadeus robots," says McCarter. "We've also got a brand new bad guy...but Cartoon Network will kill me if I spill any more, so we've got to leave some of the mysteries in!"

While the show will now be running in Cartoon Network's late-night Adult Swim block, Akins says, that doesn't mean *The Big O* isn't suddenly violent. "The original show really isn't a kid's show," says Akins. "Had Adult Swim existed back in 2001, we would have ran it [illegible] A show this smart deserves to be appreciated by an audience that will embrace it and understand it."

BIG CHANGES

As *The Big O 2* proves, anime is undergoing a big change. When America can ask for—and [illegible] the anime it wants, the possibilities are limitless.

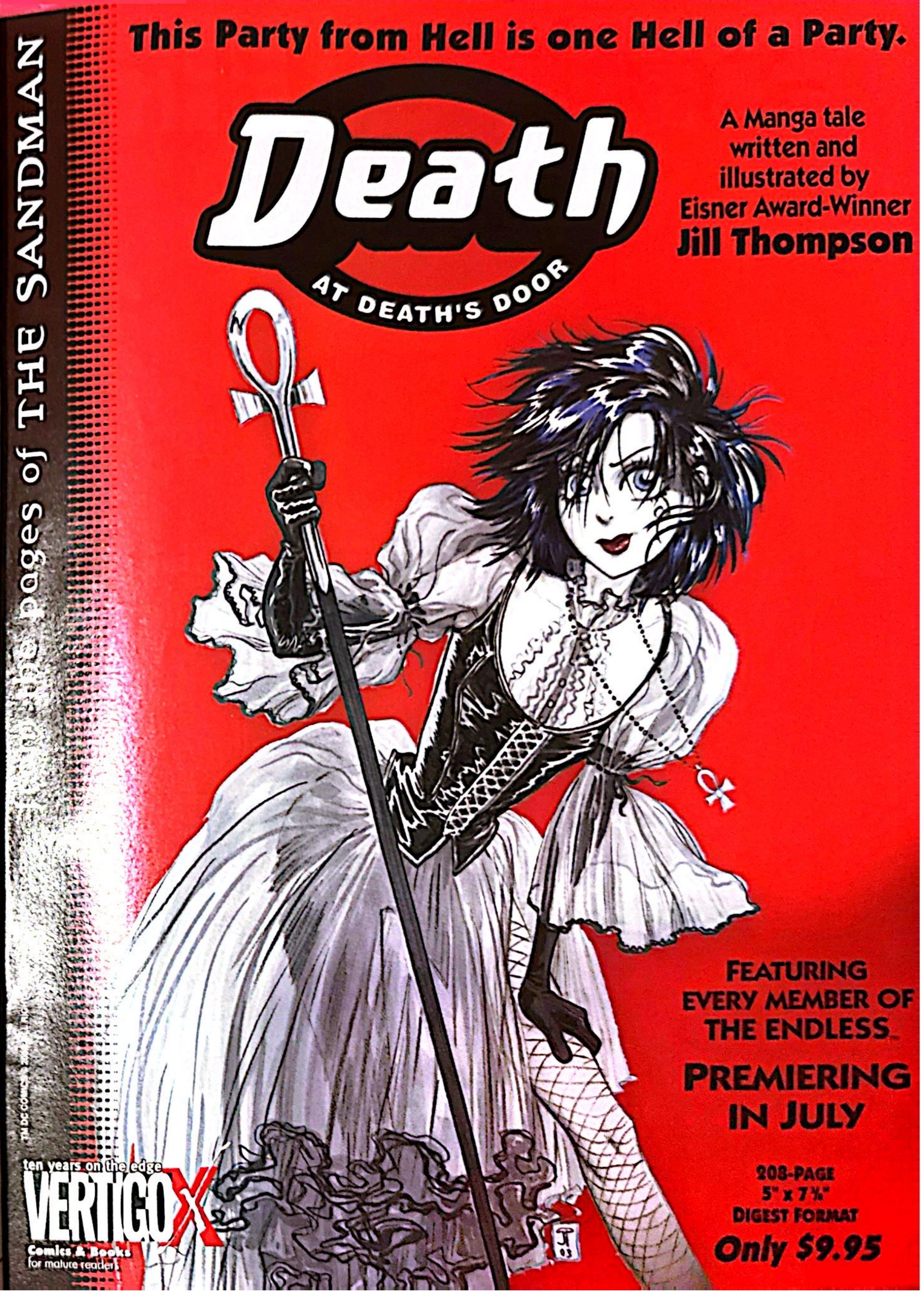
"Co-productions are becoming more common place within the Japanese animation industry in Japan and you'll only see more in the future," says [illegible] Chu. This results in more American-friendly anime—anime that's designed to appeal to American tastes.

More important, if America can demand a sequel to *The Big O*, who knows what else we can get? "The original creator of *Cowboy Bebop*, Shinichiro Watanabe, has said he'd never do any more *Bebop* after the movie," says Akins. "But I keep asking them for more, and every time they seem to budge a little bit more. Who knows? Maybe one day we'll get more *Bebop*. Wouldn't that be cool?"

Anime fans would definitely agree that it would be cool. While we're waiting for a *Cowboy Bebop* sequel, we can watch the sequel to *The Big O*—America's sequel.

It's showtime.

Whenever freelance writer Zac Bertschy hears the word "showtime," he breaks out into "Mr. Mistoffelees" from Cats.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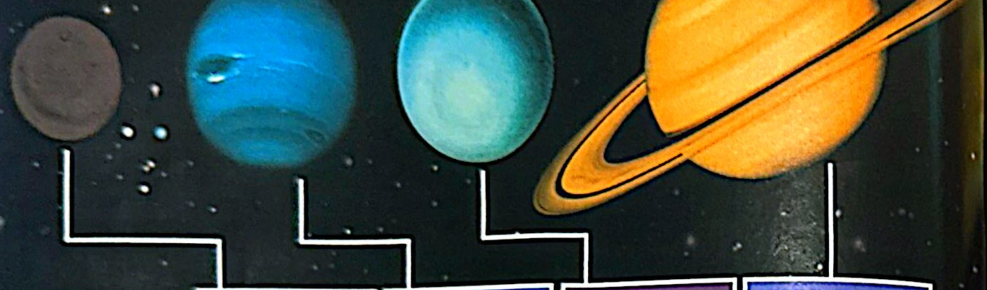
SAILOR SYSTEM

An Insider's Voyage Through the Worlds of 'Sailor Moon'

BY TRISHA L. SEBASTIAN



Sailor Moon may be your most favorite magical girl anime, but did you know that two of the Sailor Scouts are involved in a romantic relationship…with each other? Or that Sailor V was a real person, not just a video game character? Do you even know what we're talking about?

You will now. ADV Films will be re-releasing the first two seasons of *Sailor Moon* on DVD starting on July 15, including never before-seen footage that'll help you appreciate the show in an entirely different way.

Until then, to help you keep track of some of these changes, we present this helpful planetary guide to the world of *Sailor Moon*.

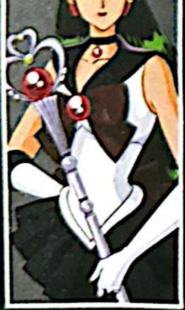
PLUTO

THE PLANET: Because it's the furthest away from the Sun, Pluto is the coldest, smallest and most mysterious of the planets. It's name after the god of death and the underworld.

THE SCOUT: Like her namesake, Setsuna is mysterious and enigmatic, guarding the Gate of Time as Sailor Pluto.

ATTACKS: Dead Scream

DIDYA KNOW? Sailor Pluto is the only scout who whispers her attack.



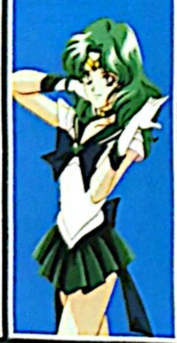
NEPTUNE

THE PLANET: No one knows what makes Neptune look blue, but its color inspired its name, from the Roman god of the sea.

THE SCOUT: A solitary soul at first, Michiru first draws Haruka's attention, then the rest of the Scouts as she becomes more confident in her powers as the water-powered Sailor Neptune.

ATTACKS: Deep Submerge

DIDYA KNOW? Once more with feeling: Michiru and Haruka are involved in a romantic relationship, not "just cousins." Deal.



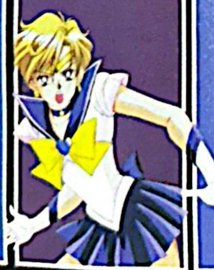
URANUS

THE PLANET: Unlike the rest of the planets, Uranus spins on a horizontal axis, in the same direction as its orbit. Uranus and Neptune's orbits often cross.

THE SCOUT: Sailors Uranus and Neptune share a special bond as well. Haruka also wears the same uniform as everyone else as Sailor Uranus, in her civilian disguise, she prefers to wear guys' clothes.

ATTACKS: World Shaking

DIDYA KNOW? Even though she's in a romantic relationship with Sailor Neptune, Haruka manages to flirt with Usagi, Rei and Minako.



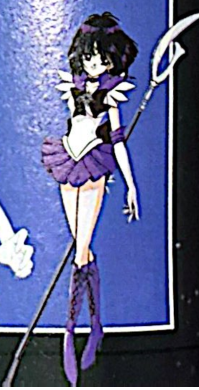
SATURN

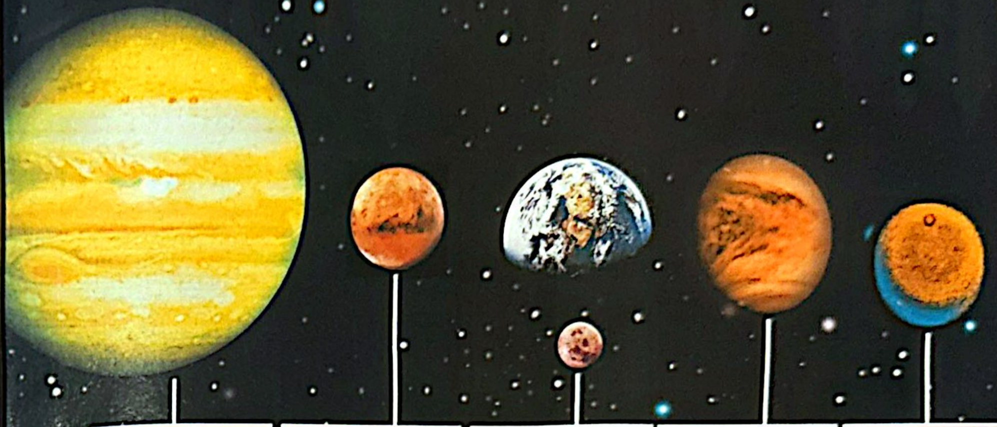
THE PLANET: Named for the powerful Roman god, Saturn's rings make this planet stand out from the rest, [illegible]ch are made up of b[illegible]s of separate ch[illegible] rocks and ice.

THE [illegible] Hotaru's quiet de[illegible] masks a pheno[illegible] power too. As S[illegible]turn, she can he[illegible]s and destroy th[illegible]

AT[illegible] The power to en[illegible] world

DI[illegible]OW? In the ma[illegible]fter Hotaru wa[illegible]ccident, many of [illegible]y parts were repl[illegible] metal. That's wh[illegible] sometimes looks [illegible] a cyborg.





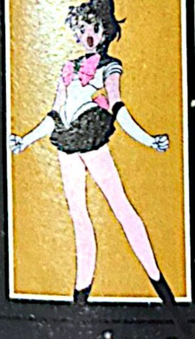
JUPITER

THE PLANET: The largest planet in the system, everything about Jupiter is big, from its satellite system to the Great Red Spot, a storm that's raged over the ga[illegible] planet for over 3[illegible]

TH[illegible] Hard-hitting, S[illegible] Jupiter—the b[illegible] the scouts—is a[illegible]hearted softie.

AT[illegible] Supreme T[illegible] Sparkling Wide P[illegible]

D[illegible]OW? Mitako's c[illegible]ent" is in her t[illegible] reason why S[illegible] she should be S[illegible]White in the s[illegible]y is because sh[illegible] the biggest breasts!



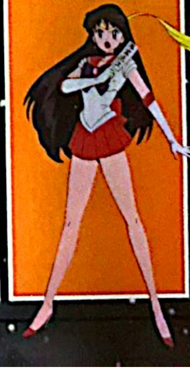
MARS

THE PLANET: Mars was the Roman god of war—a pretty aggressive guy. His fire-red planet lives up to its name with constant, eight-kilometer high dust tornadoes.

THE SCOUT: With Rei, there's no calm before the storm. Her fiery temper as Sailor Mars is often at odds with her lifestyle as a Shinto priestess. She even uses a fire theme in her attacks.

ATTACKS: Fire Soul, Burning Mandala

DIDYA KNOW? Rei does what almost everyone watching the show has wanted to do at least once—slap Serena when she gets hysterical.



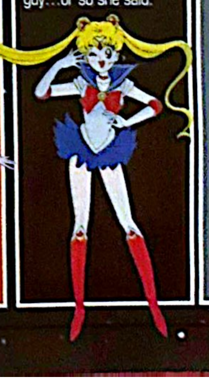
THE MOON

THE PLANET: The Silver Millennium may have had its court on the Moon—also known as Luna—but it seems like nowadays Earth's only satellite doesn't have any atmosphere at all.

THE SCOUT: Usagi can seem as clueless as an airhead, but her loving heart and kindness help her fight for right and justice as Sailor Moon. Just don't get between her and food…

ATTACKS: Moon Tiara Action, Moon Princess Halation

DIDYA KNOW? Usagi once used her Disguise Pen to enter bar to catch a bad guy…or so she said.



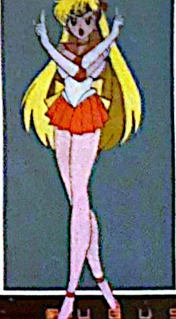
VENUS

THE PLANET: Earth's closest neighbor isn't very hospitable, but it is named after the goddess of beauty and love.

THE SCOUT: Minako's no lightweight—she spent many years fighting evil as Sailor V before appearing as Sailor Venus. That's probably why she looks so much like Serena.

ATTACKS: Crescent Beam, Venus Love Me Chain

DIDYA KNOW? She is truly a champion of love—in order to preserve the love between her two English friends, Minako faked Sailor V's death.



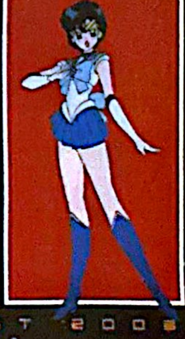
MERCURY

THE PLANET: Named for the quick-witted Roman god, Mercury's surface temperature can reach negative 170 degrees Celsius at night, but a whopping 350 degrees Celsius in the daytime.

THE SCOUT: With her wits and her analytical computer, cool customer Ami still shows a warrior's passion as Sailor Mercury.

ATTACKS: Shabon Spray, Shine Aqua Illusion

DIDYA KNOW? Maybe Ami really wants to be a police officer—there are a few references to the movie *Robocop* on her computer's screen. ☺



TRIAL BY FIRE

'Anime Insider' Dares to Rate the Films of Oscar Winner and Anime Legend HAYAO MIYAZAKI

By Cathy Sterling

He's basking in the glow of his Oscar right now, thousands of miles away.

The hype behind the newest Academy Award winner for best animated feature has been simmering for some time. Long hailed as the Steven Spielberg of Japan by anime fans, 62-year-old Hayao Miyazaki's Oscar win with 2002's *Spirited Away* has finally gotten mainstream—and corporate—America to recognize his genius. Disney's released a few of his hits on DVD, but this fire's just getting started.

This co-founder of Japan's famed Studio Ghibli is the directors' director, whose 25-year movie career creating sweeping fantasies of heart and humor has earned him the reverence of his peers. *Toy Story* director [illegible] [illegible]sseter called his films "the [illegible] [illegible]spirational" he has seen, le[illegible] [illegible] Japanese filmmaker Ak[illegible] [illegible]sawa—director of the classic [illegible] *Samurai*—chose Miyazaki's [illegible] *[illegible]ighbor Totoro* as one of his [illegible] [illegible] films of all time and even [illegible]ielberg himself described [illegible] *[illegible] of Cagliostro* as one of the [illegible]atest adventure stories of [illegible].

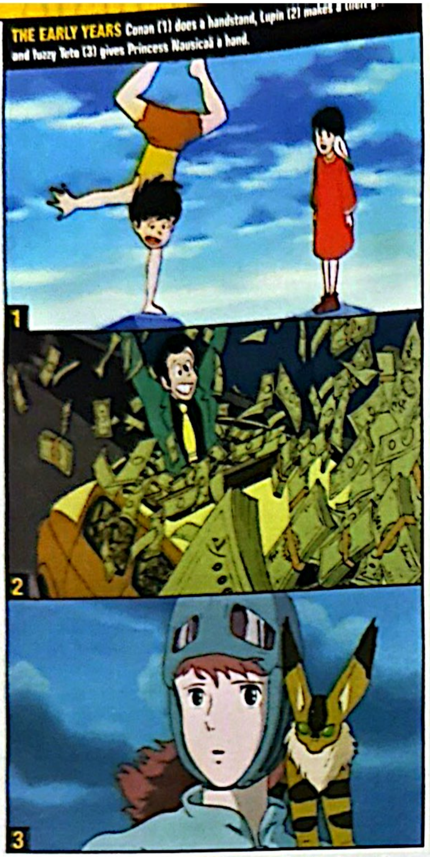
Some of [illegible]zaki's films have been impo[illegible] [illegible] America; others are being eye[illegible] [illegible]r import by hungry distributors right now. All of them were given the critical eye by the *Anime Insider* staff, to see how his style has evolved over the years, and to objectively review—if objectivity is possible here—the greatest works of Japan's greatest animator.

DRAFTING BACK Ashitaka from *Princess Mononoke* burns with the need to see all of Hayao Miyazaki's best films.

Future Boy Conan (1978)

On a flooded Earth that has been devastated by nuclear war, Conan grows up on an isolated island, only to be dragged into a conflict when he helps a girl named Lala fleeing high-tech soldiers. Taking Alexander Key's novel *The Incredible Tide* as its base, Miyazaki was less interested in the book's Cold War stand-off than in one of its ideas—that after the fall of civilization, mankind would return not only to old-fashioned levels of technology, but to old-fashioned concepts of honor and justice. By the time Miyazaki had finished with it, he had greatly altered Key's original, creating something that was in essence his own.

Technically his first film, *Conan* was actually edited together from some of the 26-episodes of the *Future Boy Conan* televison show created and sometimes directed by Miyazaki. The animation is understandably cheaper and to a lower standard than his movies that followed. However, it does contain much of his later work in miniature—bulky sea planes, great big flying fortresses, and fast paced adventure, all smeared with liberal doses of ecological caveats. It obvious that *Conan* was Miyazaki's testing ground, where he first expressed the ideas that he would continue to refine thoughout his life's work. Unfortunately, between the older animation and frequent story slow-downs, Conan is showing it's age—though charming and often fun, it pales besides Miyazaki's later works. (Unreleased in America) **C+**



THE EARLY YEARS Conan (1) does a handstand, Lupin (2) makes and fuzzy Teto (3) gives Princess Nausicaä a hand.

Castle of Cagliostro (1979)

Master thief Lupin the 3rd tries to steal first some counterfeit printing plates, and then a reluctant bride from the European city-state of Cagliostro. Lupin has the gadgetry and girls of James Bond and the morals of a mischievous child, an idea the film captures with a more cartoon-y version of Lupin and the gang that combines espionage with slapstick action. This retro appearance has kept it timeless, and it seems as fresh today as when it was first released.

Steven Spielberg reportedly called *Cagliostro* one of the best action-adventure movies of all time, and for good reason—it's full of car chases, stunts, daring rescues and escapes, a lost treasure and a damsel in distress—all wonderfully presented with equal action and comedy. While not as weighty or [illegible] as other Miyazaki's films, it's still astoundingly [illegible] and definitely Lupin's best movie to date, even over 20 years later. (Manga Entertainment, $29.95 DVD) [illegible]

VITAL STATS

HAYAO MIYAZAKI

BORN: January 5th, 1941 in Tokyo, Japan

BASE OF OPERATIONS: Butaya, a purpose-built cottage/office in Kichioji, western Tokyo, decorated with flying pigs

OTHER WORKS: On staff for *Little Norse Prince, Ali Baba's Revenge, Puss in Boots, Heidi, Anne of Green Gables*; producer on *Whisper of the Heart* and *Only Yesterday*

STARTING OUT: Earned a degree in political science and economics, but was inspired to animate by *The Snow Queen* (1957) and *White Snake Enchantress* (1959)

FIRST PROFESSIONAL WORK: *Watchdog Bow Wow* (1963) for Toei Animation

NUMBER OF TIMES HE'S RETIRED: Five: From TV (1978), From Adaptations (1989), From Animation (1998), For Real This Time, I Swear (2001)

DREAM PROJECT: Animating Arthur Ransome's sailing book "Swallows and Amazons"

MOST UNEXPECTED SIGHTING: Has been twice to the British Principality of Wales, where he watched rugby and sketched mining communities

FOR THE BIRDS: Once stopped an interview to save an injured bird in his garden ■ **CS**

McMahon photo courtesy of Everett Collection

Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind (1984)

Nausicaä, an ecologically-minded princess, struggles to protect her tiny village in a post-apocalyptic world where the last remnants of humanity cling to existence. Based on a manga he drew for the Japanese *Animage* magazine and despite assurances that it would never be animated, Miyazaki was soon asked to turn it into a movie. Because this was the first story that was completely Miyazaki's own, it is considered his first true masterpiece.

With a tough ecological message and a messianic heroine prepared to risk her life for her people, *Nausicaä* provides something for everyone. Miyazaki's fantasy world is as fully-realized as *Lord of the Rings*, the story epic but never incomprehensible, the moral poignant but never overbearing. If there is a problem with *Nausicaä*, that it's pales it in comparison to Miyazaki's own manga of the story, which is even grander in scope, and whose beautiful art even the anime doesn't do justice. And admittedly, compared to his later titles, it's showing its age. (Unreleased in America) **A**

Castle in the Sky (1986)

Two orphans, Sheeta and Pazu, are caught between opposing forces who wish to possess the secrets of Laputa, *a legendary floating city. By this point*, Miyazaki's films had *developed a distinctive* style—a cute yet indomitable heroine, a love of flight, the orderly chaos of well-choreographed chase sequences, and an ecological message that runs a lot deeper than the trendy tree-hugging of his contemporaries. Then again, nostalgic yearning for the non-existent past, when humanity had an infinite clean energy source, isn't very productive in the real world. Despite an incredible chase scene and finale that leaves even *Castle of Cagliostro* in the dust, *Castle in the Sky* does have a few pacing problems; there are a few slow bits interspersed between the gems. The fact that "Laputa" means something filthy in Spanish doesn't help. (Buena Vista Home Entertainment, $29.99 DVD) **A-**

My Neighbor Totoro (1988)

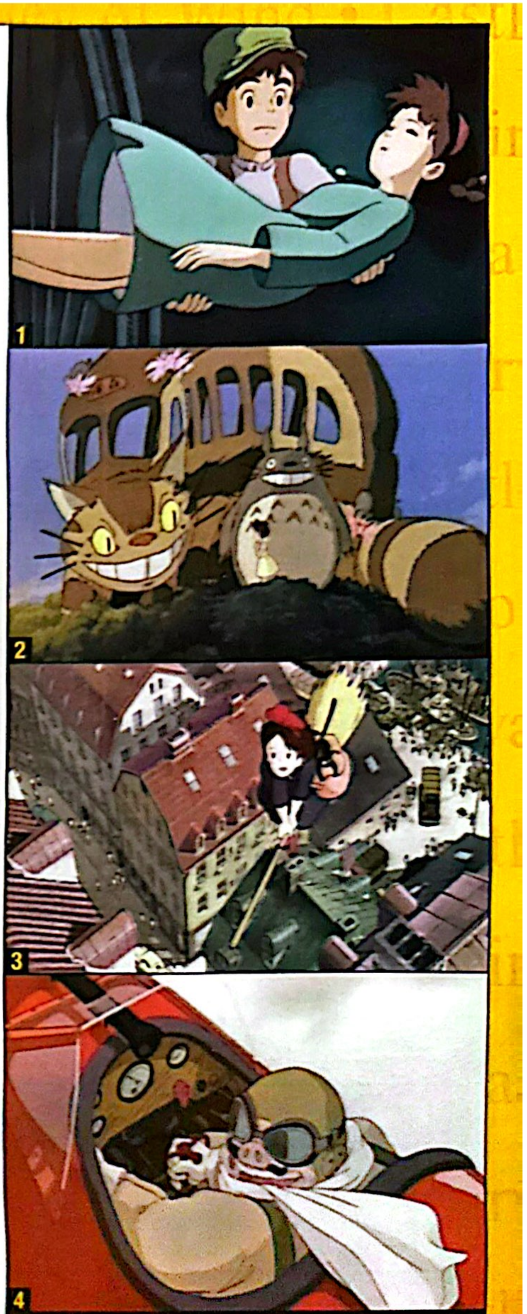
Mei and Satsuki's family has moved to the countryside where the two girls play with woodland creatures to keep up their spirits through their mother's debilitating illness.

Disgusted with the "good versus evil" conflicts of so many cartoons, Miyazaki made a story with no conflict—a virtual country vacation for city-bound latchkey kids. The result was *Totoro*, a gentle tale of woodland spirits and family love. It was a very personal project for Miyazaki, whose own mother was hospitalized when he was small; the emotion really shows on screen.

Because it was stuck on a double bill with the heart-rending tragedy *Grave of the Fireflies*, *Totoro* had the lowest box office take of any Miyazaki Ghibli movie. Despite this, it has won viewers' hearts for two generations, and even becoming the logo for Miyazaki's Studio Ghili (and a merchandising success). *Kinema Jumpo* magazine even voted it the Film of the Year ahead of any live-action movies. Because of its heart-warming message and non-reliance on cinematic convention, this is the Ghibli film that truly warranted an Oscar. (Fox, $14.98 DVD) **A+**

Kiki's Delivery Service (1989)

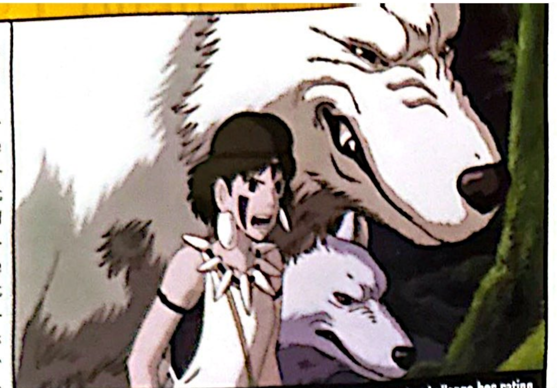
Kiki, a young witch, must prove herself by living on her own for an entire year away from her family. Another film without baddies, *Kiki* has very familiar story elements. We root for Kiki, another feisty heroine with gumption, who flirts coyly with local boy Tombo—another budding aviator. Original author Eiko Kadono reputedly disapproved of changes that were made to her story, but was soon won by Miyazaki's new perspective and



THE MIDDLE YEARS Pazu watches Sheeta (1) fall from the sky, Totoro (2) and a catbus says "Hi," Kiki (3) gives her broomstick a try and Marco Pagot (4) proves pigs can fly.

scenes, proving that his "formula" could have continued success.

Thanks to its heroine, *Kiki* cracked the oft-neglected girls' audience and its quaint "olde-worlde" styling and use of 1970s charttoppers on the soundtrack made it accessible to any grandparents and parents who would follow their children into the theater. *Kiki* would become one of the highest-grossing Japanese movies of all time—a record that later Ghibli movies smashed repeatedly—and won the Japan Academy Award. Despite all the fun, it's not nearly as epic as *Laputa* or *Nausicaa*. (Buena Vista Home Entertainment, $29.99 DVD) **B+**



IN WOLVES' CLOTHING San (a.k.a. Princess Mononoke) dares anyone to challenge her rating.

Porco Rosso (1992)

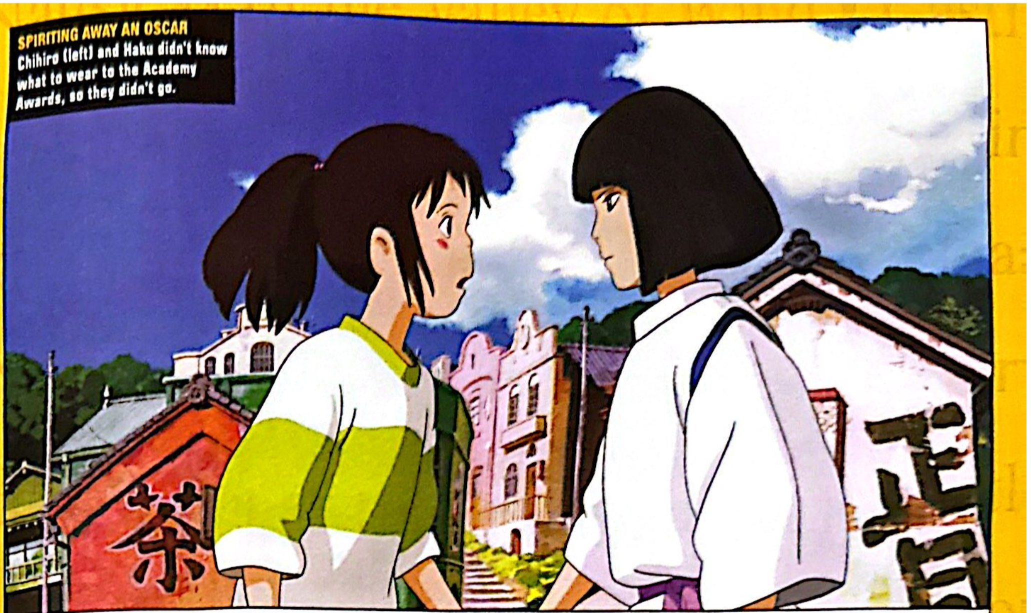
Former air ace Marco Pagot has become a pig and must duel with American pilot Donald to pay for the repairs on his plane and save the honor of spunky teenage mechanic Fio. Originally a short in-flight movie for Japan Air Lines about a flying pig, the project blossomed into a full-length feature. With instructions to the Studio Ghibli team to make anime for "tired, middle-aged men," Porco Rosso was an anime for adults with a widow who discusses her lost lovers, a pilot past his pri[illegible] group of men who have forgotten they were once youthful idealists.

In its execution, it returns to the cartoony elements of *Castle of Cagliostro*—how else can you approach the idea of a man in a fistfight with a talking pig? Walking a fine line between comedy and pathos, *Porco Rosso* became Ghibli's, and Miyazaki's greatest success to that date, with earnings nobody thought could be beaten. A decade on, *Porco Rosso* has shown its long-term appeal—audiences who saw it as children are now old enough to genuinely appreciate it, making it a film that does not disappoint when the original viewers watch it with their own kids. (Unreleased in America) **A-**

Princess Mononoke (1997)

Ashitaka is cursed by a dying boar-god and is drawn into a multi-sided conflict over the future of the country. Basing his characters loosely on the historical people of Japan, *Mononoke* features a four-way struggle where every side has honorable intentions—the last word on the no bad-guy policy of *Totoro*, and the eco-message of *Nausicaä*. More than tripling the box-office of *Porco*, *Mononoke* blew Spielberg's *E.T.* away at the box office, making a Ghibli movie Japan's most popular film ever. It also picked up the plaudits, including a Japan Academy Award, runner-up in the "Kinema Jumpo" Film of the Year, and a Nebula Award nomination for its English script.

For many in the United States it was their first encounter with Ghibli and the reviews were mixed. Some thought it lacked the passion and the subtletly of Miyazaki's earlier masterpieces; others thought it ponderous and heavy-handed. In order to avoid mass edits to the film, Ghibli imposed draconian restrictions against making any changes—something that may have kept the American release from being more accessible. (Miramax, $32.99 DVD) [illegible]



SPIRITING AWAY AN OSCAR Chihiro (left) and Haku didn't know what to wear to the Academy Awards, so they didn't go.

Spirited Away (2001)

After h[illegible]ents are turned into pigs by the witch Yubaba, young, [illegible]n Chihiro must work at Yubaba's bathhouse in a mys[illegible] world until she gains the strength to rescue them. T[illegible] fully-realized, immediately-endearing personalities of the characters from spoiled Chihiro to worldly Rin, keep this from being a mere rehash of Miyazaki's themes. *Spirited Away* is a perfect story about growing up, taking responsibility for one's actions, and finding the strength to care of yourself and those you love—but it's incredibly entertaining to boot. From the slow, snaky appearance of the spirits to the jaw-dropping stink monster, Miyazaki has crafted a world that viewers believe in with every frame. And when it's over, only Chihiro will want to leave.

The story may be simple, but it's resonated with viewers around the world as clearly indicated by the dozens of awards *Spirited Away* has garnered around the international film community. There were intimations of greatness when the movie shared the Best Film prize at the Berlin Film Festival, and scooped four awards at the Annies, but Miyazaki finally got the credit he has long deserved when *Spirited Away* walked off with an Oscar. (Buena Vista Home Entertainment, $29.99 DVD) **A+**

Freelance writer Cathy Sterling's parents were recently turned into pigs, and she'll rescue them...when she gets around to it.

MAKE YOUR OWN MIYAZAKI FLICK

Wanna be called the "Steven Spielberg of Japan?" Sure, we all do! That's why we've worked up this hand[illegible] chart to let you create your own anime masterpiece. Just pick one element from each category and wait for your Oscar in the [illegible]

THE SETTING	THE HERO	THE PLOT	THE SIDEKICK	THE VILLAIN
In Early 20th century Europe…	…a environmentally-conscious princess named Nausicaa…	…must rescue porcine parents…	…alongside a cute fox/cat hybrid…	[illegible] a giant-headed [illegible]h's selfish greed.
In 16th century Japan…	…a young, spunky witch named Kiki…	…must defend the forest-dwelling Shishi God…	…alongside mystical forest animals…	[illegible] the descendant of [illegible] royal family's quest for power.
In modern day Japan…	…a young, sullen girl named Chihiro…	…must save a village and the planet …	…alongside a surly, talking cat…	…from an evil government's plot.
In a post-apocalyptic future…	…a oppressed worker named Pazu…	…must get a job and protect the town …	…alongside very quiet, friendly robots…	…from evil boars' and monkeys' violence.
In a weird spirit realm…	…a young, cursed prince named Ashitaka…	…must protect a girl named Sheeta and a magic pendant…	…alongside a hamster and tiny bird combo...	…from an American flying ace's thirst for glory.

THE LAST 'CASTLE'

Miyazaki Returns from Retirement…Again

Ready to quit while he was ahead on *Spirited Away*, Miyazaki announced that he was retiring for real from active production, and leaving Ghibli in the hands of the younger generation. For the company's next project, he wanted to take a backseat on *Howl's Moving Castle*, an adaptation of a book by British author Diana Wynne Jones that Ghibli had optioned in 2000.

The original story is about Sophie, who is stuck running a hat-shop while her step-sisters go off to have fun. Transformed into an old woman by a vengeful sorceress, Sophie seeks the help of Calcifer, a demon imprisoned in the hearth of a flying castle. He agrees to free her from her curse if she will release him from his prison, so she takes a job at the castle as a housekeeper for Howl, the castle's insufferable wizard owner.

Diana Wynne Jones
Howl's Moving Castle

But Mamoru Hosoda, the former *Digimon* director hired to helm Howl, eventually quit himself in 2001 after failing to "satisfy" the bosses at Ghibli. *Howl* was shelved...until Miyazaki rolled up his sleeves to do it himself. As the script is already written by *Street Fighter II V*'s Reiko Yoshida, this will be the first time Miyazaki directs a movie that he didn't also write...unless he decides to change that, too.

At 63 years old, he's not ready to retire just yet. ■ **CS**

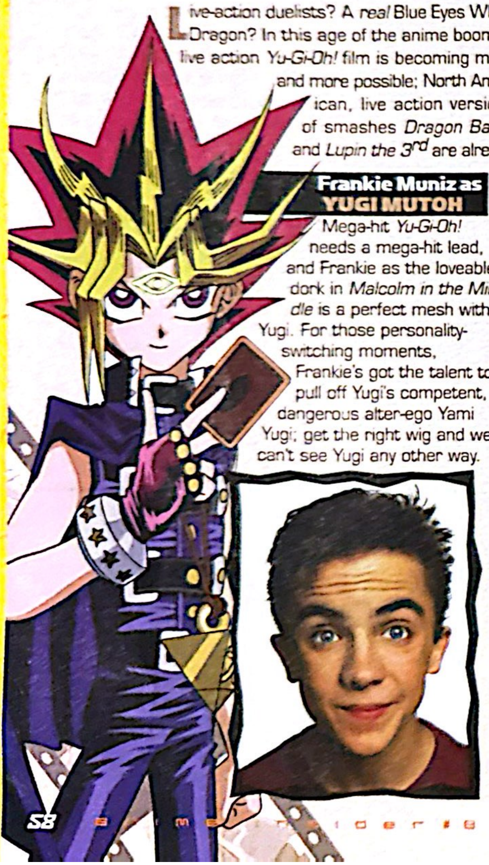
CASTING CALL

Watch Out, Hollywood—We've Cast the Live-Action 'Yu-Gi-Oh!' Movie

By Lianne Sentar

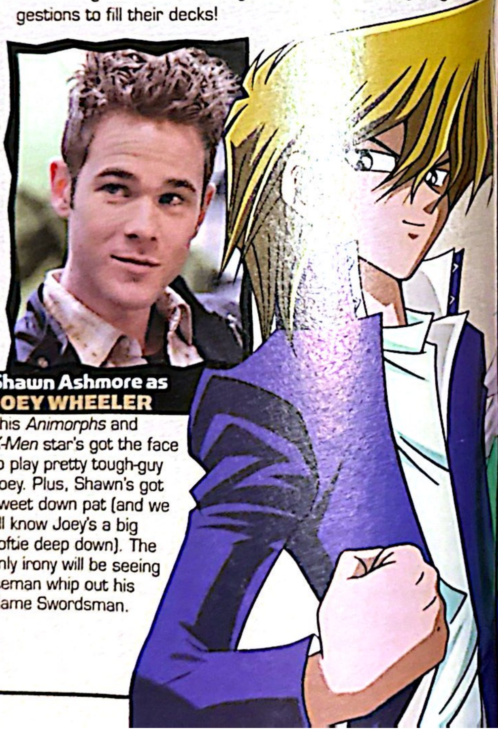
Live-action duelists? A *real* Blue Eyes White Dragon? In this age of the anime boom, a live action *Yu-Gi-Oh!* film is becoming more and more possible; North American, live action versions of smashes *Dragon Ball Z* and *Lupin the 3rd* are already in the planning stages. Could today's hottest kids' craze be in for a medium jump?

We'd like to see a live-action *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, to reflect what a monster (excuse the pun) success the show is in the States. To help steer those movie execs in the direction of our King of Games, we've got some hot casting suggestions to fill their decks!



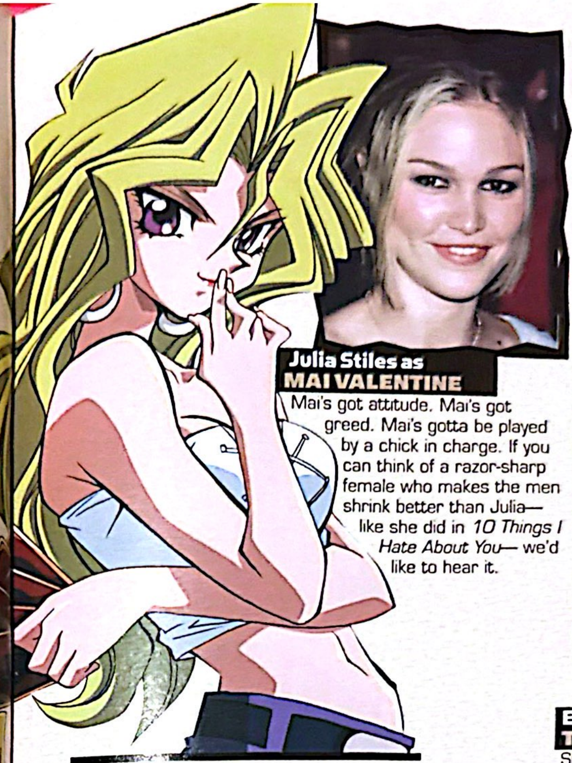
Frankie Muniz as YUGI MUTOH

Mega-hit *Yu-Gi-Oh!* needs a mega-hit lead, and Frankie as the loveable dork in *Malcolm in the Middle* is a perfect mesh with Yugi. For those personality-switching moments, Frankie's got the talent to pull off Yugi's competent, dangerous alter-ego Yami Yugi; get the right wig and we can't see Yugi any other way.



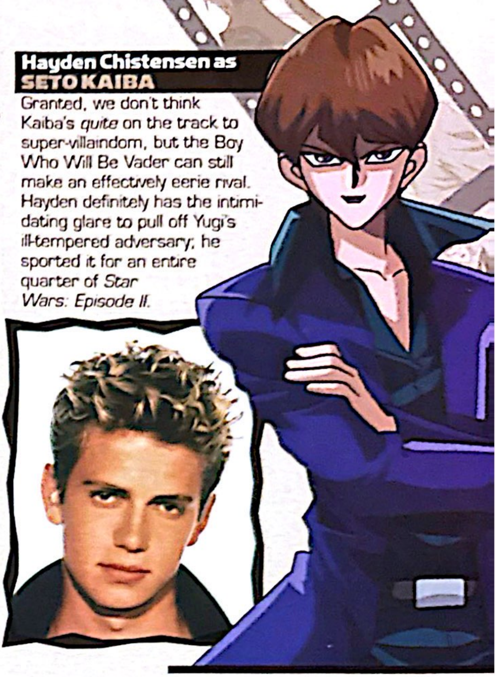
Shawn Ashmore as JOEY WHEELER

This *Animorphs* and *X-Men* star's got the face to play pretty tough-guy Joey. Plus, Shawn's got sweet down pat (and we all know Joey's a big softie deep down). The only irony will be seeing Iceman whip out his Flame Swordsman.



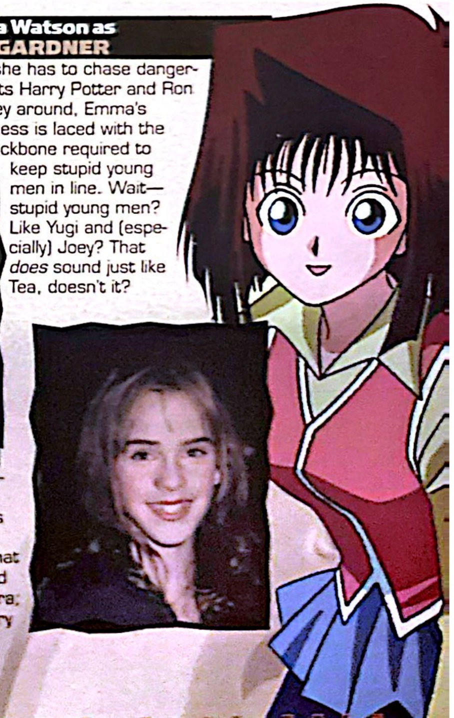
Julia Stiles as MAI VALENTINE

Mai's got attitude. Mai's got greed. Mai's gotta be played by a chick in charge. If you can think of a razor-sharp female who makes the men shrink better than Julia—like she did in *10 Things I Hate About You*— we'd like to hear it.



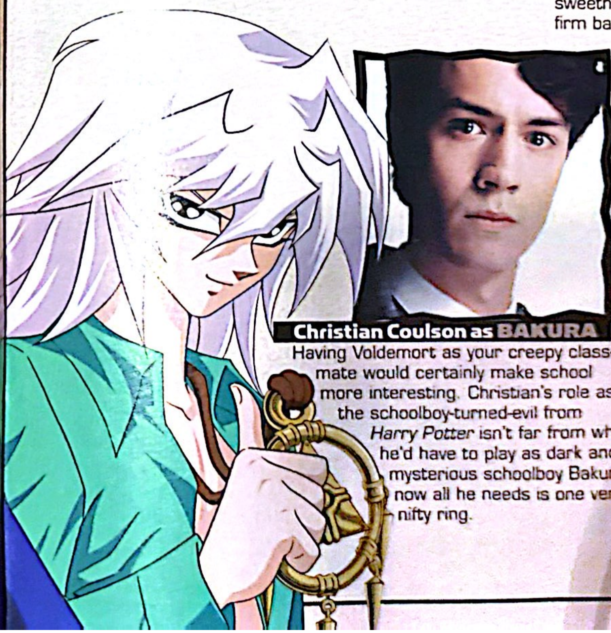
Hayden Chistensen as SETO KAIBA

Granted, we don't think Kaiba's *quite* on the track to super-villaindom, but the Boy Who Will Be Vader can still make an effectively eerie rival. Hayden definitely has the intimidating glare to pull off Yugi's ill-tempered adversary; he sported it for an entire quarter of *Star Wars: Episode II*.



Emma Watson as TEA GARDNER

Since she has to chase danger-magnets Harry Potter and Ron Weasley around, Emma's sweetness is laced with the firm backbone required to keep stupid young men in line. Wait—stupid young men? Like Yugi and (especially) Joey? That *does* sound just like Tea, doesn't it?

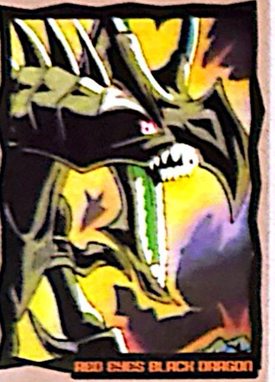


Christian Coulson as BAKURA

Having Voldemort as your creepy classmate would certainly make school more interesting. Christian's role as the schoolboy-turned-evil from *Harry Potter* isn't far from what he'd have to play as dark and mysterious schoolboy Bakura; now all he needs is one very nifty ring.

THE REEL DEAL

What's Up With Yugi's Movie in Japan?

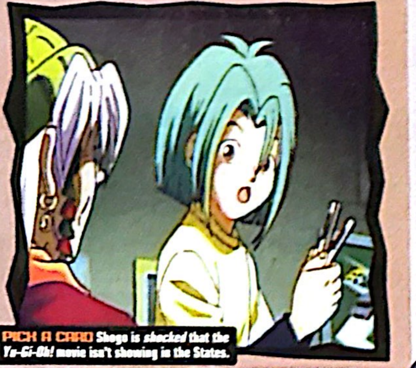


RED EYES BLACK DRAGON

As it turns out, Yugi's already had a movie—in Japan. The Japanese *Yu-Gi-Oh!* animated movie features the original story of a boy named Shogo, a wanna-be duelist who's picked on by his peers.

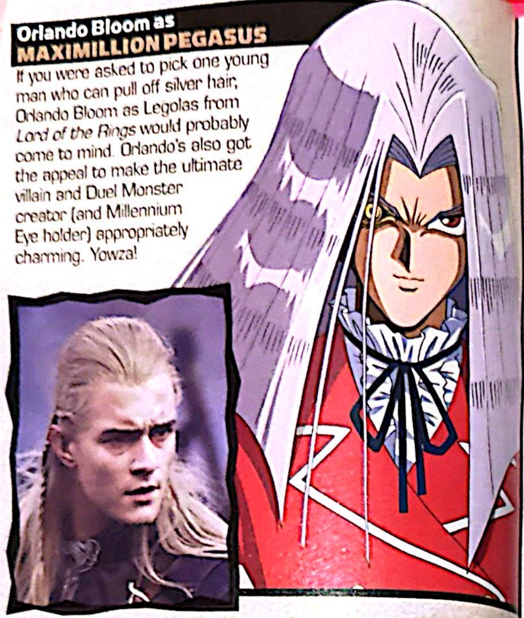
Shogo finds a Red Eyes Black Dragon card in a random pack of Duel Monsters. Though it seems like a ticket to victory, the card works on potential and will be wasted without the courage to duel. Shogo's Red Eyes Black Dragon drags him into a dangerous tournament of Kaiba's, but Yugi and Joey are there to protect him—if Shogo can find enough courage for his card to protect them.

Toei showed the 30-minute *Yu-Gi-Oh!* movie as part of their 1999 Spring animation fair, an annual group showing of short movies from Toei's hottest titles. Since the movie coincides with the first series (which has yet to make it over here) and North American *Yu-Gi-Oh!* developer 4Kids Entertainment had no comment, it's hard to predict whether or not we'll ever see the film in North America. As Pegasus might say, we shall see. NLS



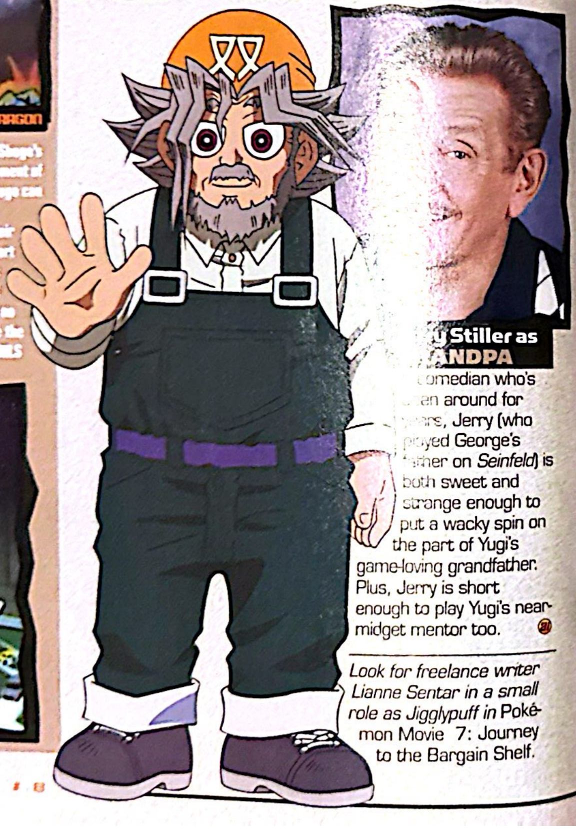
PICK A CARD Shogo is shocked that the *Yu-Gi-Oh!* movie isn't showing in the States.

All photos courtesy Everett Collection with the exception of Steve Admore © 2003 20th Century Fox



Orlando Bloom as
MAXIMILLION PEGASUS

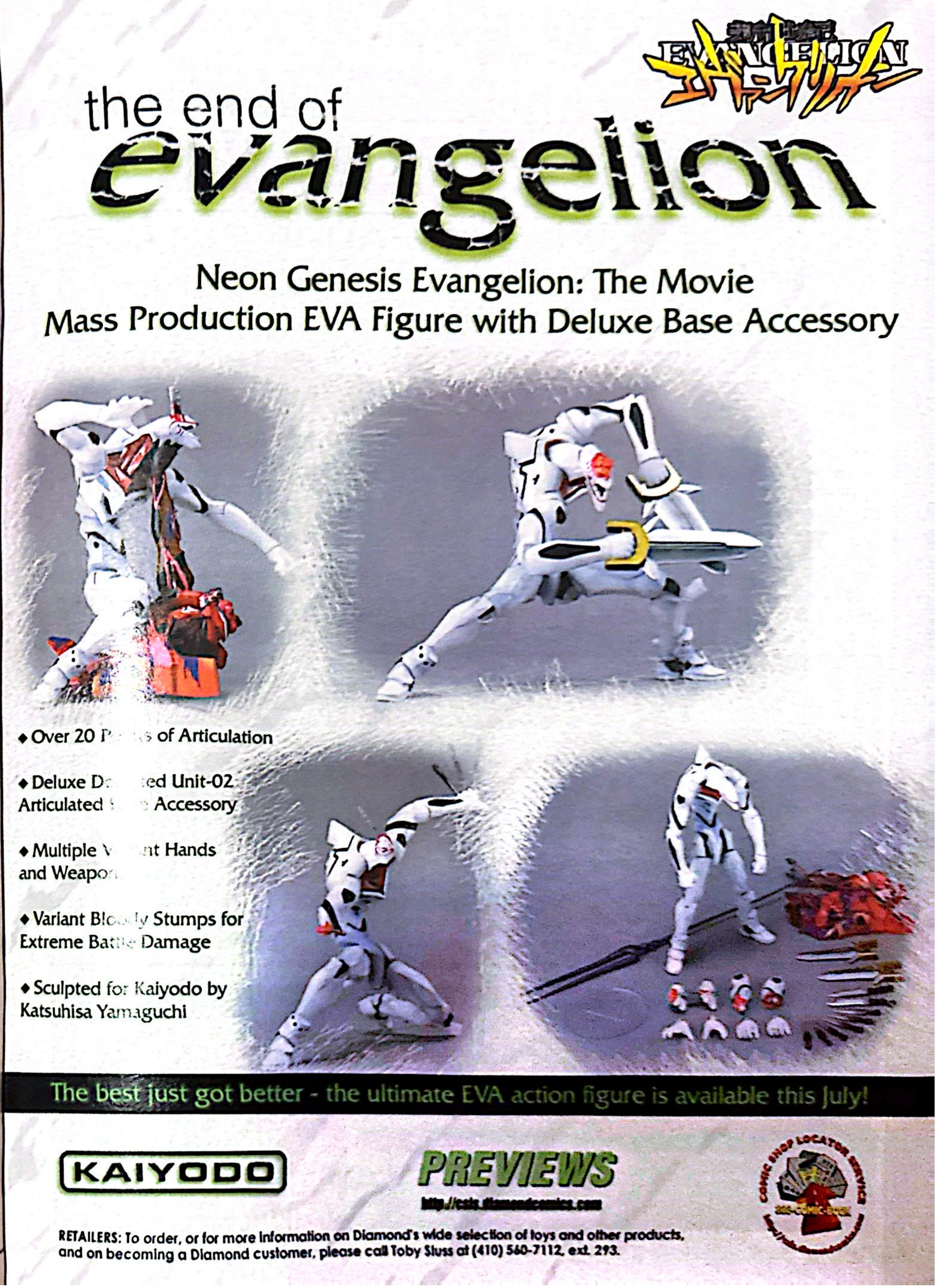
If you were asked to pick one young man who can pull off silver hair, Orlando Bloom as Legolas from *Lord of the Rings* would probably come to mind. Orlando's also got the appeal to make the ultimate villain and Duel Monster creator (and Millennium Eye holder) appropriately charming. Yowza!



y Stiller as
ANDPA

A comedian who's been around for years, Jerry (who played George's father on *Seinfeld*) is both sweet and strange enough to put a wacky spin on the part of Yugi's game-loving grandfather. Plus, Jerry is short enough to play Yugi's near-midget mentor too. ⓐ

Look for freelance writer Lianne Sentar in a small role as Jigglypuff in Pokémon Movie 7: Journey to the Bargain Shelf.



the end of evangelion

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'BATTLER' ROYALE

NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN 'AURA BATTLER DUNBINE' MAKES IT TO THE US

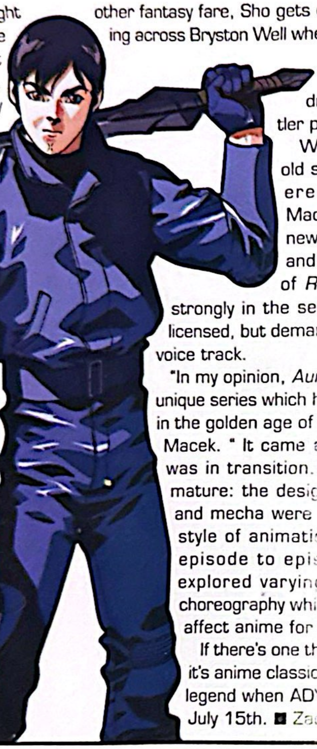
In this world where anime licenses fly almost straight from Japanese TV to American DVDs, it might be hard to believe that one of the most beloved giant robots anime of all time has never made it to America. It's especially hard to believe when it was created by Yoshiyuki Tomino, who also created a little series called *Mobile Suit Gundam*. Luckily, you won't have to believe it much longer. ADV Films is bringing over the 20-year old anime classic *Aura Battler Dunbine* to DVD this July.

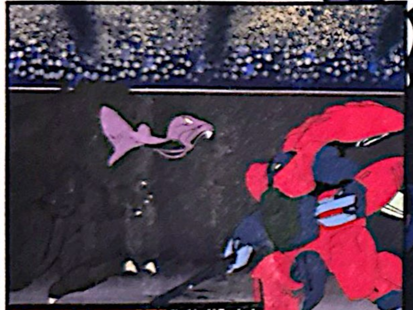
A mix of science fiction and fantasy, *Aura Battler Dunbine* stars Sho Zama, a motorcycle driver who gets transported to the world of Byston Well after an accident. Complete with castles, dragons and other fantasy fare, Sho gets drawn into the war raging across Bryston Well when it's discovered he has an enormous amount of "Aura" power, and gets drafted as an Aura Battler pilot.

While importing such an old series might be considered risky, Carl Macek—ADV's executive of new business development and the legendary creator of *Robotech*—believed so strongly in the series he not only got it licensed, but demanded it get a full English voice track.

"In my opinion, *Aura Battler Dunbine* is a unique series which holds a significant place in the golden age of televised anime," says Macek. " It came at a time when anime was in transition. The storytelling was mature: the designs of both characters and mecha were fresh and the actual style of animation was in flux—from episode to episode the animation explored varying angles, timing and choreography which would influence and affect anime for years to come."

If there's one thing Carl Macek knows, it's anime classics. You can check out a legend when ADV releases *Dunbine* on July 15th. ■ Zac Bertschy





AURA OF A CHAMPION Yoshiyuki Tomino's insectoid robots are a far cry from his Gundams.

FAST FORWARD

QUICK PEEKS AT THE NEXT BIG VIDEOS

THE GREAT GHIBLI

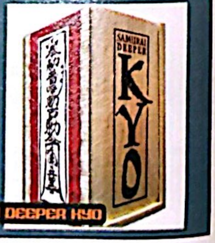
The three-long-awaited Ghibli DVDs from Buena Vista made a strong anime showing after their April 15th release. According to Videoscan, *Spirited Away* was the fourth best-selling DVD in the nation for the week of April 19th, with *Castle in the Sky* #12 and *Kiki's Delivery Service* trailing at #20.

'DBGT' GOES BACK

Wondering where the first 15 episodes of *Dragon Ball GT* went? At May's Anime Central, FUNimation announced it will release DVDs containing episodes 1-15 after they release the last DVD containing episode 64. What did you miss? The first episodes tell a slower version of Goku blasting off into space to search for the Dragon Balls.

INTO THE WOOD

Media Blasters is releasing a collector's box with their upcoming *Samurai Deeper Kyo* DVD which tells the story of a harmless medicine man who shares his soul with the ruthless "Demon Eyes". To enhance the tone and mood of the series, the box will be made out of real wood! ■ ZB



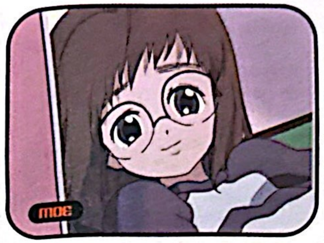
SAMURAI DEEPER KYO

'RISKY' PROPOSITION

ONLINE RETAILER ANIMENATION ENTERS THE FRAY

The world of anime has a brand-new entrant in the licensing battle. AnimeNation, the Internet's largest anime retailer, has just formed AN Entertainment and is set to release their first title, *Risky/Safety*, on July 8.

"The opportunity to share anime we love with other fans has also been a dream of many members of the AnimeNation staff, so we're thrilled to finally have the opportunity to make that dream come true," says writer John Opplinger, from AnimeNation.com's "Ask John" column.

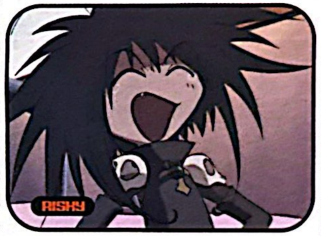


MOE

The show follows the adventures of a young, love-lorn girl named Moe, who recently lost her boyfriend. Moe's sorrow causes Risky, a spunky little devil spirit, to manifest itself and cause trouble for Moe while providing advice. But Risky shares a body with Safety, a little angel spirit summoned by Moe's smile. Risky and Safety battle it out to guide Moe down the "proper" path.

AN Entertainment considers Risky Safety the perfect choice for their first title. "Several members of the AnimeNation staff have been fans of the TV series for a number of years," explains Opplinger. "We really adored the show's lush, soft art design and its wonderful combination of melancholy drama and whimsical humor."

With their years of serving anime fans, Opplinger thinks AN Entertainment is in a unique position to give otaku exactly the kind of anime releases they want. It makes sense—if hardcore fans know how to please anyone, it's themselves. ■ ZB

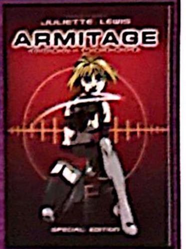


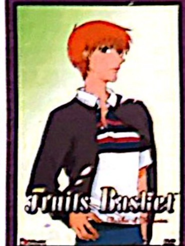
RISKY

EASTERN EGGS

HIDDEN SECRETS OF YOUR FAVORITE DVDS

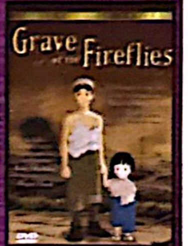
ARMITAGE: DUAL MATRIX
After the movie's done and the end credits are rolling, press the 'skip' button on your remote control. There's an extra little animated scene there of Mousse fixing one of the Thirds.





FRUITS BASKET VOL. 3
Go to the "extras" menu. Enter "10" on your remote control. You'll get access to a series of dub outtakes, as well as a few hilarious scenes of the characters trying out for each others' roles!

GRAVE OF THE FIREFLIES: SPECIAL EDITION
Turn on the option to watch the entire film in storyboards, and then skip to the closing credit sequence. Instead of the Japanese production credits, you'll get a whole host of information on the film, including box office data and a complete list of awards the film has received!



HAND MAID MAY

HAND MAID MAY VOL. 1
Highlight the "Appendix Menu" and press up. In the upper left hand corner, the small video that's playing will be highlighted. Press 'enter' to see a clean opening animation. The clean closing animation can be accessed by highlighting 'Kasumi File: 1' and pressing up, then selecting the highlighted video.

SPIRITED AWAY
Go to the "Bonus Features" menu. Make sure "Introduction by John Lasseter" is highlighted and press the "up" key on your remote control. You'll see a new menu entry, titled "Meet Hayao Miyazaki". Press "enter" and you'll be treated to a hidden interview with the man himself, director Hayao Miyazaki! ■ ZB

SPIRITED AWAY

ON THE SHELF

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR ANIME STORES THIS SUMMER?

JULY

ART OF FIGHTING

Ryo and Robert are the only witnesses to a mob killing, and now they're on the run. The mob kidnaps Ryo's sister, though, so it's time for the two fighters to lay the smackdown! Based on the videogame. (Central Park Media, DVD, $19.99)

BANDIT KING JING VOL. 1

The legendary bandit king Jing travels across the countryside looking for fortune and stealing from other bandits with his trusty bird (and weapon) Kir. Comes with an attractive art box. (ADV, DVD, $29.98)

BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN

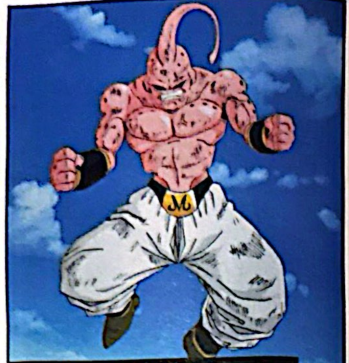
Based on the classic PlayStation fighting game, this fan-favorite OVA episode has arrived on DVD. Your favorite fighters—including the lovely, whip-toting Sofia—battle it out for total supremacy! (Central Park Media, DVD, $19.99)

BRIGADOON VOL. 2

Melan Blue desperately tries to keep his fighting with evil aliens to an absolute minimum so as not to disturb Marin's "normal" life. (TOKYOPOP, DVD, $29.98)

CARD CAPTOR SAKURA VOL. 16

Li has decided to finally confess his true feelings to Sakura! Unfortunately, Meilin has returned, and Li spills the romantic beans to her first, giving the spunky girl ample time to mess things up. (Pioneer, DVD, $29.98)



BIPPITY BOPPITY BUU Majin Buu may be invincible, but that mean Goku can't get a few licks in.

CHOBITS VOL. 3

Hideki finally lands a date with the adorable Yumi, but is so wrapped up in the possibilities that he fails to notice Chi's reaction. New clues about the Chobits persocom series go unnoticed. (Pioneer, DVD, $29.98)

CITY HUNTER TV SEASON 1

The first half of the long-running *City Hunter* TV series. Catch the misadventures of Ryo Saeba, the most lecherous and capable detective on the block, as he saves the ladies from peril. The question is, who will save the ladies from Ryo? (ADV, DVD, $89.98)

DESCENDANTS OF DARKNESS COLLECTION

Collected in a snazzy art box. Join Tsuzuki and his new partner Hisoka as they solve a serious of bizarre and gruesome crimes that all seem to point to a mysterious [illegible] maniacal figure from Hisoka's past. (C[illegible]rk Media, DVD, $99.98)

DRAGON BALL [illegible] 5 & 6

Goku, Pan, and Tr[illegible]p fighting the good fight against the [illegible], mind-controlling menace Baby. Bu[illegible]appens when Baby possesses all the o[illegible]ans—and mechanical genius Bulma? [illegible]mation, DVD, $24.95 each)

DRAGON BALL Z: [illegible] BUU BOX SET

Majin Buu has been resurrected Problem 1: He's indestructible. Problem 2: Goku's dead. Can the last two Saiyans, little Goten and Trunks, learn the Fusion technique in time to save the universe? (FUNimation, DVD, $57.95)

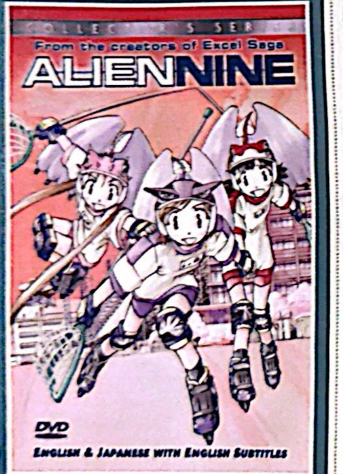
EDEN'S BOWY VOL. 2

Assassins from Eden are in hot pursuit of Yorn, Elisis, and that creepy old man. Unfortunately, our three heroes are totally outnumbered and outclassed. How can Yorn and Elisis possibly outwit them and survive? (ADV, DVD, $29.98)

HOT PICK

ALIEN NINE

July 7th on DVD, $29.98
Central Park Media


COLLECTOR'S SERIES
From the creators of Excel Saga
ALIEN NINE
DVD
ENGLISH & JAPANESE WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

You thought you had it rough in school! Yuri, a brand-new 6th grade student, has been elected to take out the menacing aliens that routinely invade the school. To make matters worse, she's forced to wear a creepy and disgusting symbiotic alien helmet that seems to act more like a parasite than a defense system. Things start to heat up when a series of mysterious and gruesome events force Yuri to investigate what's really going on at the school, and the answers she comes up with are anything but typical! Based on the smash hit manga by Hitoshi Tomizawa (also being released by Central Park Media), *Alien Nine* starts out innocently enough, but becomes one of the most disturbing series ever produced. We won't spoil all the twists and turns this wicked little series has in store for you; suffice to say, it's one seriously mind-bending trip. Then again, what did you expect from the creators of *Excel Saga*, anime's most notoriously whacked-out comedy series? The surprise ending will have you scratching your head (and running for the bathroom). ■ ZB

EL-HAZARD BOX SETS

The complete *El-Hazard* TV series in a two-box set. This re-telling of the original *El-Hazard* OVA series follows Makoto and the entire cast of the original OVA as they avoid the schemes of the evil and bumbling Jinnai. (Pioneer; DVD, $79.99)

FIST OF THE NORTH STAR VOL. 3 & 4

Two more volumes and fourteen more episodes of head-exploding. Only Kenshiro, master of the Hokuto Shinken fighting style, can save a post-apocalyptic world from becoming even more chaotic. (Manga Entertainment, DVD, $29.98)

FLCL VOL.3

The final volume of Gainax's amazingly chaotic OVA series. Find out the secrets behind Medical Mechanica, and brace yourself for the wildest love confession in anime history! Will Naota's life ever be the same? (Synch-Point, DVD, $34.95)

FULL METAL PANIC VOL. 3

Held hostage aboard a plane, it's up to Sosuke to use his training to its fullest and rescue both his classmates and Kaname from the clutches of an evil terrorist organization that plans to use Kaname as a science experiment. (ADV, DVD, $29.98)

GREAT TEACHER ONIZUKA VOL. 9

Onizuka's managed to get the sophomore class to Okinawa for a field trip, but the trouble hasn't stopped. Bullying, swimsuit shopping, near-death experiences and a wild treasure hunt are on Onizuka's class agenda! (TOKYOPOP, DVD, $29.99)

.HACK://SIGN VOL. 3 SPECIAL EDITION

Tsukasa has fallen into the trap laid by the Crimson Knights and is now under custody of The World administration! Even more clues are revealed about the mysterious Key of Twilight. Includes a bonus soundtrack CD. (Bandai, DVD, $39.98)

JUBEI-CHAN COLLECTOR'S SET

Jiyu is a young girl who is gifted one day with a heart-shaped eyepatch that transforms her into the legendary Yagyu Jubei, a swordsman with amazing skill. With great power, however, comes great responsibility! (Bandai, DVD, $49.98)

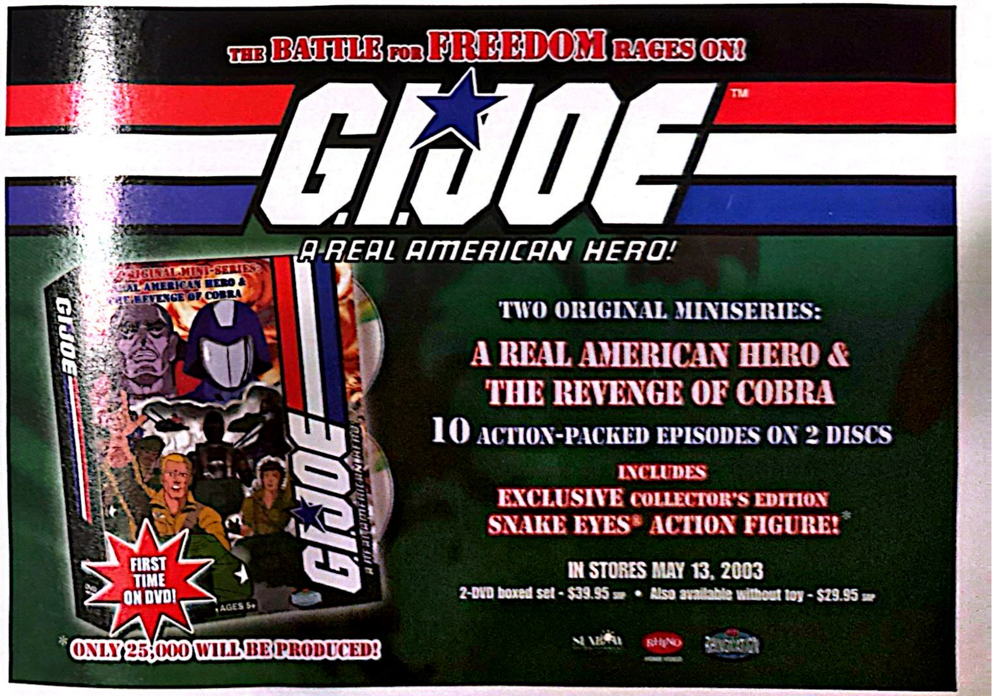
SNIKT! This claw-bearing thug from *Fist of The North Star* did Hugh Jackman's stunts in *X-Men 2*.

KAIDOHMARU

Based on the manga, this unique and beautifully rendered OVA episode is brought to you by the same people responsible for *Blood: The Last Vampire*. Check out the interview on page 18 for more! (Manga, DVD, $24.98)

LUPIN THE THIRD VOL.3

More whacked-out adventures with everyone's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favorite thief Lupin, and his semi-heroic band of super-talented misfits. This time, the gang faces a horde of zombies, Fujiko nearly gets hitched, and there's a Lupin impostor running amok! (Pioneer, DVD, $24.98)

NIEA_7 BOX SET

Mayuko's life is hard enough as it is. To complicate matters, Niea, a 7th-class "under-alien" resides inside Mayuko's closet and creates chaos wherever she goes. From the creator of *Serial Experiments Lain*. (Pioneer, DVD, $79.98)

PLEASE TEACHER VOL. 2

Kei and Mizuho go on their honeymoon, which is naturally interrupted by Hyosuke and the usual gang. Despite the lack of quality time alone, Kei and Mizuho's relationship blooms, and the seeds of romance are planted for another couple. (Pioneer, DVD, $29.98)

REVOLUTIONARY GIRL UTENA VOL. 7

Things start to heat up at Ohtori Academy. Why is Akio trying to revolutionize the world? Who really is the Rose Bride, and what's in the castle floating above the dueling stage? (Central Park Media, DVD, $29.98)

SAIYUKI VOL.3

A fortuneteller named Chin vows to destroy Hakkai to avenge his people. Goku is tricked into consuming a forbidden fruit, and Gojyo is duped by a beautiful young woman. Can Sanzo's gang trust anyone? (ADV, DVD, $29.98)

SAKURA WARS TV VOL. 2

Both Kouran the Brain and Kanna the Brawn join forces with the Imperial Flower Troop. Unfortunately, the opposition has also bolstered their ranks with the likes of Resatsu the Lumbering Brute and Setsuna the Imp! (ADV, DVD, $29.98)

SOL BIANCA: THE LEGACY BOX SET

The entire *Sol Bianca* sequel DVD series in a single box. Rejoin the crew of the Sol Bianca as they hunt down the Earthians, a group of religious extremists who are forcibly seizing the planet's most valuable treasures. (Pioneer, DVD, $59.98)

X TV VOL. 6

Fuma has become the other "Kamui". Subaru and Seishiro battle it out yet again; this time, their past is totally revealed, while Subaru suffers from a mortal wound! (Pioneer, DVD, $29.98)

UP AND AWAY The *Banner of the Stars* crew plan for wars...in the stars.

WILD ARMS VOL. 5

The final volume of the *Wild Arms* TV series, based on the hit video game. Sheyenne still has no body to call home, and his precious Laila has been kidnapped by a strange cult that's worshipping her as a goddess! (ADV, DVD, $29.98)

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST! THE MOVIE

A dangerous terrorist threatens to destroy every bridge in Japan. A far cry from the comedic nature of the earlier *YUA* offerings, this feature film edition is action-packed [illegible] loaded with tense drama. (ADV, DVD, [illegible])

YU YU HAKUSHO [illegible] & 16

The Dark Tourna[illegible]s, with the stakes now higher than [illegible]ore. Will Yusuke, Kuwabara, Kie[illegible] [illegible]ne pull out of the deadly competition [illegible] souls intact? And what is the secre[illegible] Masked Fighter?! (FUNimation, [illegible]4.95)

AUGUST

AI YORI AOSHI VOL. [illegible]

A simple trip to the beach turns into a contest for Kaoru's love as seemingly everyone except Aoi has worn a revealing swimsuit. Can Aoi and Kaoru's love compete against the bevy of bathing beauties vying for Kaoru's heart? (Pioneer, DVD, $29.98)

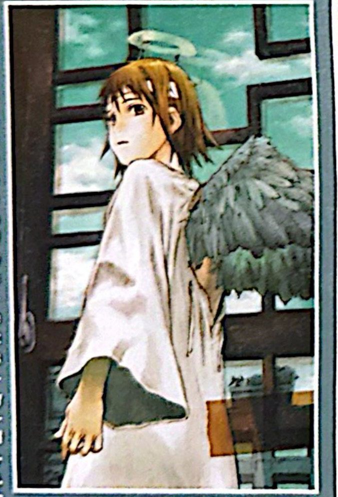
BANNER OF THE STARS II VOL. 1

The second sequel to the hit sci-fi series *Crest of the Stars*. Rejoin Lafiel and Ginto as they further develop and grow, making inroads towards peace between the Abh and other species. (Bandai, DVD, $29.99)

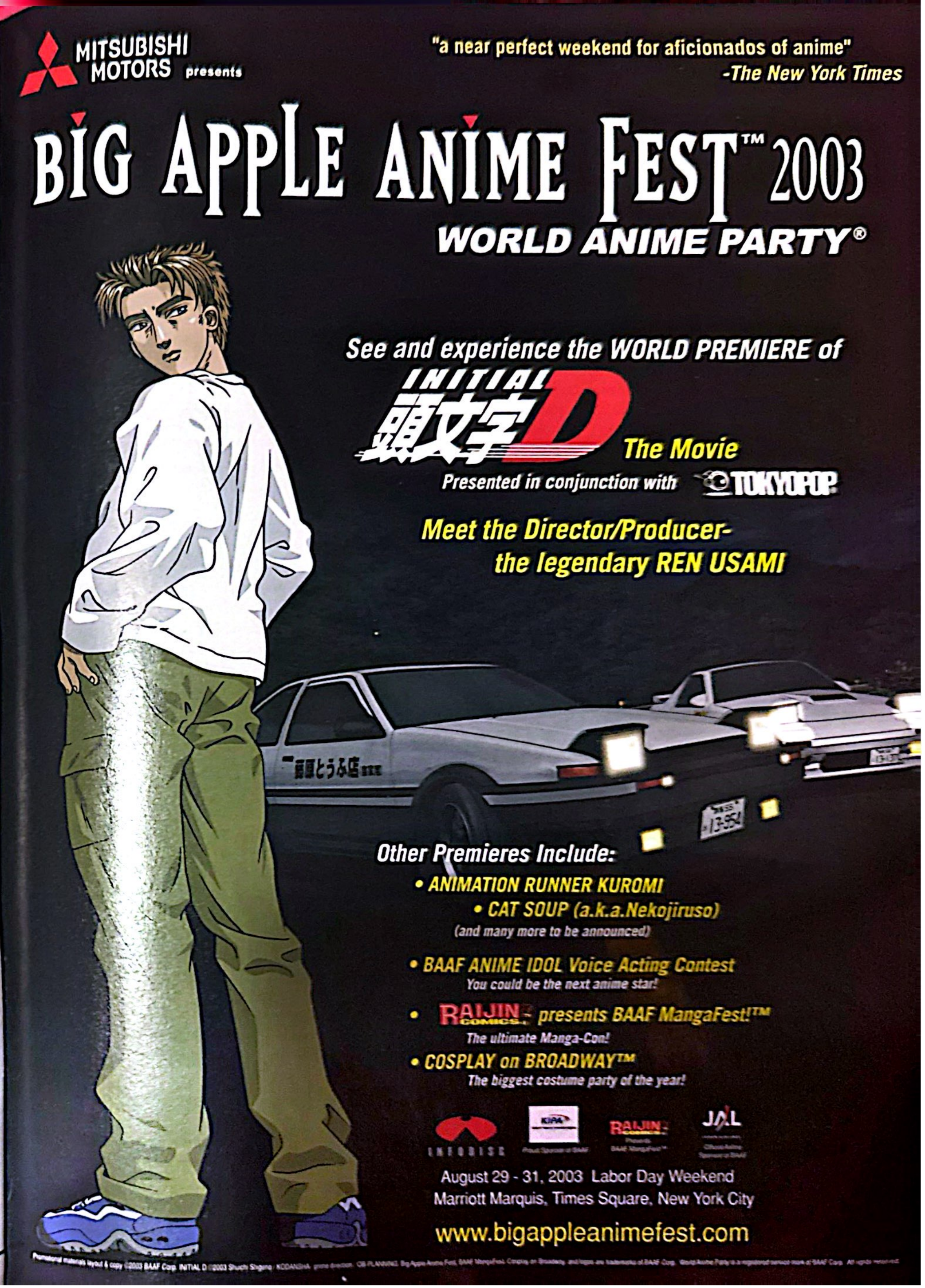
HOT PICK

HAIBANE RENMEI

August 26th on DVD, $34.98
Pioneer Animation



Angels may have been a popular anime fad in Japan, but no one has done them like Yoshitoshi ABe, the creator of fan-favorites *Serial Experiment Lain* and *Niea_7*. *Haibane Renmei* (or "Charcoal Feathers Federation") is his latest project, the first anime series ever to be based on a doujinshi (a fan-created-comic book), and it's also one of the most unique shows to come along in a great while. The series focuses on a world where a group of beings called "ash-wings"—essentially humans with wings and little halos—live inside an old school building on the outskirts of a European-style town. The ash-wings can't remember anything about their lives before they awoke in this bizarre place. The show's central character is Rakka (who looks suspiciously like *Serial Experiments Lain*'s main character), a girl who was born from a pod that grows in the utility closet and struggles with her new life as an ash-wing. The story is told entirely through Rakka's eyes, so the audience goes on the same journey that she does; discovering the mysteries of the world around her and slowly deciphering the clues about her past. *Haibane Renmei* is an extremely unique and interesting show, and has already made big waves in the fan community. ■ ZB



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www.bigappleanimefest.com

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DARK MYTH

A two-part series collected on one DVD, this brain-bending and confusing fantasy series will require all of your wits if you want to make real sense out of it. The story follows themes of darkness, love, passion, truth and the very depths of the soul. (Manga, DVD, $19.99)

DNA2 VOL. 4

In the final volume, find out if Karen successfully removes the Mega-Playboy virus from Junta, and if Junta can ever get over his phobia of women long enough to realize his true feelings for Karen! (Central Park Media, DVD, $29.98)

DRAGON BALL: PICCOLO JR. SAGA PART 2 BOX SET

The fight against Piccolo rages on in this uncut set of original *Dragon Ball* episodes. A young Goku struggles against the mighty Piccolo, who's even more powerful than King Piccolo! (FUNimation, DVD, $39.95)

HADES PROJECT ZEORYMER VOL. 2

Masato Akitsu led your average schoolboy's life, until he discovered he was a genetically engineered life form! Now, Masato must once again pilot the giant robot Zeorymer. (Central Park Media, DVD, $19.99)

JUNKERS COME HERE

With her parents' marriage in turmoil, a young girl turns to a talking dog for solace. This heart-warming film has become a family classic in Japan, and Bandai has loaded it with extras! (Bandai, DVD, $29.99)

KIKAIDER VOL. 1

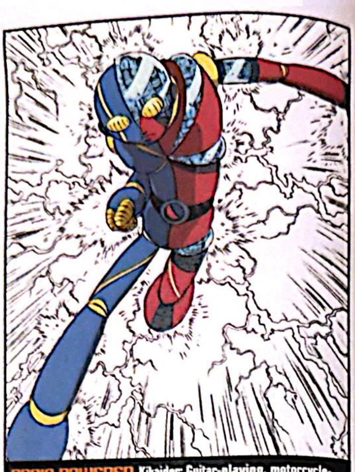
Based on the hit live-action series, *Kikaider* centers around one Dr. Komyoji, a scientist forced to work for the evil Dark Demolition Corps. He secretly builds a robot, Kikaider, to combat the terrifying monsters that Dark Demolitions produces. (Bandai, DVD, $29.98)

MACHINE ROBO VOL. 2

The peaceful lives of the citizens of Cronos are disrupted when invading robots from Gandora smash apart their world. Cronos launches their own robots, and the battles continue in this second volume. (Central Park Media, DVD, $19.99)

MAHOROMATIC 2: VOL. 1

Just when things started getting back to normal, another combat maid shows up and complicates poor Suguru's life even further. Mahoro and the new maid, Minawa, team up and work extra hard to keep pace with Suguru's crazy life. (Pioneer, DVD, $29.98)



BRAIN POWERED Kikaider: Guitar-playing, motorcycle-riding loner by day; brain-exposed baddie-fighting robot by night.

MASTER KEATON VOL.2

More *Murder She Wrote*-esque crime-solving with war veteran and archaeologist Master Keaton. Travel around the world with Keaton, saving beautiful women and uncovering priceless artifacts! (Pioneer, DVD, $29.98)

NEW DOMINION TANK POLICE COMPLETE COLLECTION

The complete collection sequel to the classic *Dominion Tank Police*, the ever-mischevious and deadly Puma Twins as they outwit, outclass and out-scheme the Tank Police, ever on the trail of these two beautiful criminals. (Madman, DVD, $24.95)

REIGN VOL. 4

The final battle for Alexander culminates as he's faced with the spirits of those he's slaughtered for prosperity over the years. (TOKYOPOP, DVD, $29.98)

SABER MARIONETTE J ULTIMATE COLLECTION

Get *Saber Marionette J*, *J to X*, and *Again* in one complete collection! In the future, the only females around are androids; how can poor Otaru handle three of them all on his own? (Bandai, DVD, $199.99)

TINY SNOW FAIRY SUGAR VOL. 3

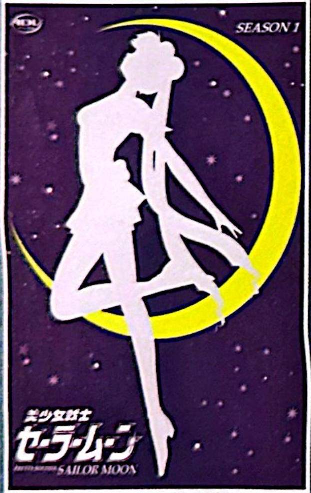
Join fairies Sugar, Pepper and Salt in their adventures. After the visit of an elder fairy, will Sugar's friendships ever be the same? (Pioneer, DVD, $29.98)

HOT PICK

PRETTY SOLDIER SAILOR MOON SEASON 1

July15th on DVD, $149.98

ADV Films



Finally, ADV is giving hardcore Moonies the pleasure they've been denied so long. The deluxe-boxed set of the entire first season of *Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon*—all 1,065 minutes of it—in its original uncut, uncensored and subtitled format is finally here. Truly a landmark event in the history of anime, this release marks the first time these episodes have appeared in their unaltered form. Longtime fans of the TV dub might be amazed to see that Sailor Moon and pals aren't the only ones who transform! Marvel as Usagi (called Serena in the U.S.), hooks up with a boy six years her senior! Be astounded by the relationship between Zoicite and Kunzite (Malachite), Queen Beryl's cohorts in crime, who are actually both men! Cry your hearts out as the Sailor Senshi (Scouts) occasionally die as gruesome death! All 46 episodes of the first season will be made available, as several of the episodes were skipped entirely during the show's original broadcast run. The series comes as a set of 8 DVDs, packaged in a handsome foil-stamped art box. Better preorder this one now, or in the name of the Moon, you'll be punished! ■ ZB

★ ★ ★ ★ CHICAGO ★ ★ ★ ★
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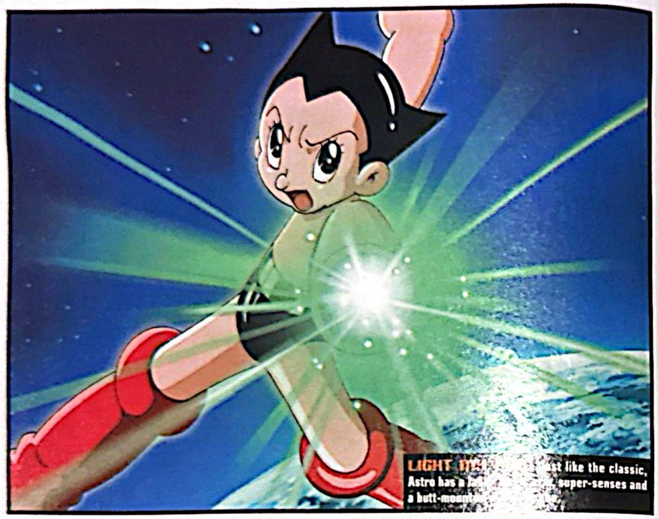
'BOY' OH BOY!

'ASTRO BOY' BLASTS BACK TO AMERICA


LIGHT [illegible] [illegible]st like the classic, Astro has a [illegible] super-senses and a butt-mount[illegible]

To celebrate the April 7th, 2003 birth of Astro Boy, Japan got a brand-new *Astro* TV series. Happily, Kids WB! has decided to let America in on the celebration. The classic anime icon *Astro Boy* will hit the U.S. airwaves on Kids WB!, which will debut the 26 episodes of the new *Astro Boy* series later this fall.

"*Astro Boy*'s universal appeal has made him a timeless character representing justice and reason in the world," says Tara Sorensen, vice president of creative affairs of Sony Pictures Television who are helping Kids WB! bring *Astro* over. "It's a thrill to introduce *Astro Boy* to a new generation of kids." The new *Astro Boy* will have some help with state-of-the-art computer animation to help tell the classic *Astro Boy* tales.

Astro Boy is the story of a future where humans and robots not-so-peacefully coexist. The brilliant Dr. Boyton strives to perfect what will be his greatest creation, a robot with human emotions. When his son Toby is killed in a car accident, Dr. Boyton makes the robot in his son's image. He also gifts this atomic-powered android with advanced intelligence, foot rockets, and an incorruptible sense of right and wrong. Now Astro Boy fights to protect the citizens of Metro City from the evil humans and robots, including the incredibly powerful android Atlas.

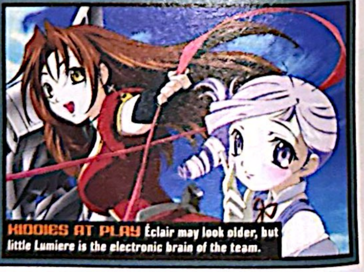
The original *Astro Boy* was cre[illegible] the legendary artist Osamu Tezuka, the "god of m[illegible] the 1950s. The character rocketed to popu[illegible] *Astro Boy* became one of the first anime seri[illegible] created, premiering in Japan in 1963. Later [illegible] saw Astro Boy reincarnated in countless man[illegible] color anime series in the '80s, which never ai[illegible] America, but are currently released on video by [illegible] Entertainment. ■ Caitlin Moriarity

TUNE IN TOKYO

CHECK OUT THE LATEST ANIME THAT'S ONLY ON THE AIR IN JAPAN

KIDDY GRADE

In the future, humanity has colonized distant star systems, but human nature—and human greed—hasn't changed. It's the Galactic Trade and Tariffs Organization's job to negotiate contracts and arbitrate on an interplanetary level, and keep the universal economy running smoothly—on its terms. Not an easy task, and one that requires some very special agents. Enter Éclair and Lumiere, two of the universe's toughest cyborgs. Lumiere is the ultimate hacker, able to acquire whatever information is needed with a single touch to the right terminal. Éclair would probably be the most powerful cyborg in existence, if it weren't for the fact she's been reprogrammed so many times her personality has become literally childlike. Still, under the command of GOTT commander Eclipse, these two will do whatever the job requires. ■ CM


KIDDIES AT PLAY Éclair may look older, but little Lumiere is the electronic brain of the team.

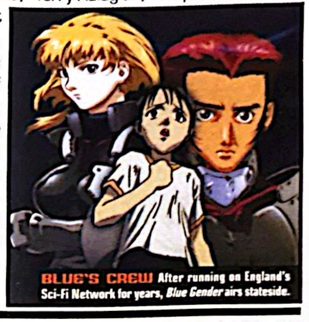
'BLUE' AND BLOOD!

BUGS INFEST ADULT SWIM

If you thought Adult Swim needed big guns, big explosions or big bugs, you're in luck—Cartoon Network adds the hardcore sci-fi adventure *Blue Gender* to its Adult Swim lineup starting midnight on August 4.

Blue Gender is the story of Yuji Kaido, a terminally ill patient who agrees to be cryogenically frozen until a cure is discovered. Yuji awakens in a nightmare world where giant bugs called "Blue" have overrun the Earth and humanity survives only in scattered pockets. Yuji is rescued and recruited to join humanity's last ditch effort against the invaders.

"We chose this show because it was compelling from the very first episode," Terry Kalagian, vice president of programming at Cartoon Network. "It is kind of like the anime version of the live action movie *Starship Troopers*." If you can't wait for the episodes, FUNimation has volumes 1-7 of the *Blue Gender* DVDs available now. ■ CM


BLUE'S CREW After running on England's Sci-Fi Network for years, *Blue Gender* airs stateside.

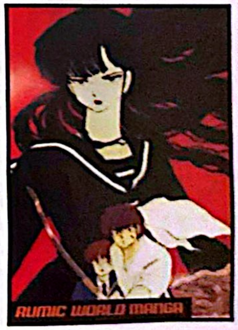
DYNAMIC DUO

MASTERS GET NEW SHOWS

This summ[illegible] is sure to keep Japan glued to the tube—both Rum[illegible] Takahashi, creator of *Inu-Yasha* and *Ranma 1/2*, and M[illegible]y *Punch*, creator of *Lupin III*, will debut brand-new an[illegible] TV shows.

Rumiko Ta[illegible]shi's Theater will premiere in Japan later this summer, [illegible]ed on Takahashi's myriad manga short stories, some o[illegible]ch were published in the U.S. by Viz as *Rumic Theate*[illegible]ather than having one continuous storyline, *Rumiko Taka[illegible]i's Theater* will be an anthology-style TV series, presen[illegible]g one story per episode.

Meanwhil[illegible] Monkey Punch has c[illegible]eated an action-comedy [illegible]ies called *Cinderella Boy*, about a private investigator. Interestingly, the main character is named Ranma, who gets combined into his female partner's body—clearly a parody of Rumiko Takahashi's hit series *Ranma 1/2*, in which a boy named Ranma turns into a girl in cold water. ■ RB & CM


RUMIC WORLD MANGA

ON THE AIR

WHAT TO WATCH WHERE

ABC FAMILY

BEYBLADE

Beyblade: Weekdays 7:30 a.m.; Sat. & Sun. 7:30 & 9 a.m.
Medabots: Weekdays 7 a.m.; Sat. & Sun. 7 & 9:30 a.m.
Tokyo Pig: Sat. & Sun. 11 a.m.

CARTOON NETWORK

Toonami: Weekdays Mon.-Fri., *Dragon Ball Z* 5 p.m., *Dragon Ball* 5:30, *Yu Yu Hakusho* 6 p.m, and the fan-favorite Kyoto story arc of *Rurouni Kenshin* at 6: 30 p.m.

KIKAIDER

Adult Swim: Cartoon Network's late-night mature programming block airs weeknights Mon-Thurs, showing *Kikaider* at 12 a.m., *Inu-Yasha* at 12:30, *Reign* at 1 a.m. and *Lupin III* at 1:30 a.m. *The Big O* reruns at midnight beginning July 10. And don't forget, *The Big O 2* premieres at 11 p.m. on August 3!

Super Saturday: *Pokémon* at 7 p.m., *Yu-Gi-Oh!* at 9:30 p.m., *Yu Yu Hakusho* at 10 p. m., *G Gundam* at 10:30 p. m., and *.hack//SIGN* at midnight.
Hamtaro: Weekdays 7 a.m., 2 p.m., Sat. 1 p.m., Sun. 6 p.m.
Pokémon: Weekdays 9 a.m., Mon.-Thurs. 9 p.m.,

FOX BOX

Fighting Foodons: Sat. 9:30 a.m.
Kirby: Right Back At Ya!: Sat. 8 a.m.
Ultimate Muscle: Sat. 10 a.m.

DBGT

INTERNATIONAL CHANNEL

Dragon Ball GT: Sat. 10:30 p.m.
El Hazard: Wed. 11 p.m.
Fushigi Yugi: Tues. 11 p.m.
Slayers: Fri. 11 p.m., Sat. 11 p.m.
Soul Hunter: Mon. 11 p.m.

KIDS WB!

Megaman: NT Warrior: Sat. 9:30 a.m.
Pokémon: Weekdays 4 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m.
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Weekdays 4:30 p.m., Sat. 8:30 & 11 a.m.

DUAL

TECH TV

TechTV's Anime Unleashed adds a new 4:30 p.m. airing Monday through Friday, in addition to its regular weeknights 1 to 1:30 a.m., and Friday 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. Offerings include *Silent Mobius, Dual, Betterman, Crest of the Stars* and *Serial Experiment Lain*. Check TechTV.com for the most recent listings.

OTHERS

These channels air mega-hit anime on irregular schedules, so check the most up-to-date listings on their websites.
Anime Network: http://www.theanimenetwork.com.
Action Movie Channel: http://www.actionmoviechannel.com
Showtime Beyond: http://www.sho.com/beyond ■ CM

'TRIGUN' WILL TRAVEL

LONG AWAITED MANGA FINALLY COMING FROM DARK HORSE

Those of you who have longed to see the further adventures of Vash the Stampede need not wait any longer. Dark Horse and Digital Manga have announced that they would be co-publishing the *Trigun* and *Hellsing* manga along with the manga adaptation of *The Ring*.

Highly anticipated, these titles are a move in a different direction for the independent comics publisher. "Dark Horse is stepping into a brave new era in manga publishing, and these three titles, as well as the previously announced *Berserk*, are the vanguard of this new effort," said editor Tim Ervin-Gore.

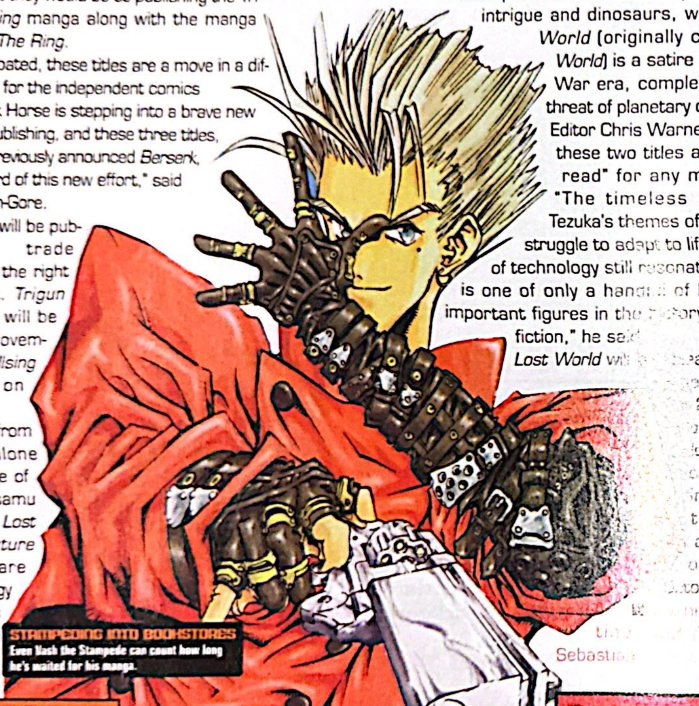
The manga will be published as trade paperbacks in the right to left format. *Trigun* and *The Ring* will be released on November 1 with *Hellsing* following on December 1.

Other titles from Dark Horse alone are the release of two classic Osamu Tezuka stories, *Lost World* and *Future World*. They are part of the trilogy of sci-fi titles begun with *Metropolis*, released in April.

Though both feature surprise cameo roles by *Astro Boy* characters, the stories are very different. *Lost World* takes place on a Jurassic-era planet, amidst intrigue and dinosaurs, while *Future World* (originally called *Next World*) is a satire on the Cold War era, complete with the threat of planetary destruction. Editor Chris Warner feels that these two titles are a "must read" for any manga fan. "The timeless nature of Tezuka's themes of humanity's struggle to adapt to life in the age of technology still resonate today. He is one of only a handful of legitimately important figures in the history of graphic fiction," he said.

Lost World will be released as one [illegible] volume on [illegible] 2 and *Future World* will be released in two volumes, the first on September 24 and the second on October 8.

■ Jennifer M. Contino and Trisha L. Sebastian



STAMPEDING INTO BOOKSTORES
Even Vash the Stampede can count how long he's waited for his manga.

QUICK READS

PAGE TURNIN' NEWS CLIPS

CAP OF THE ICEBERG

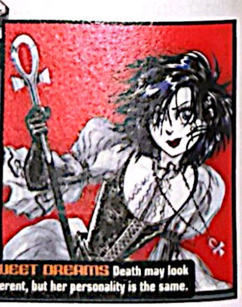
Some of your favorite Capcom videogames will be getting the manga treatment, courtesy of Dreamwave. *Megaman, Devil May Cry, Maximo, Rival Schools* and *Darkstalkers* make up the first wave of books starting this August. Will other titles like *Resident Evil* be going the manga-route as well?

JUMP FOR KENSHIN?

Rurouni Kenshin fans, the wait is almost over! Viz has announced they do indeed have the right to the long-awaited, original *Kenshin* manga, However, they have not yet announced whether they'll serialize it in *Shonen Jump*, release manga collections or both.

DEATH GETS A MAKEOVER

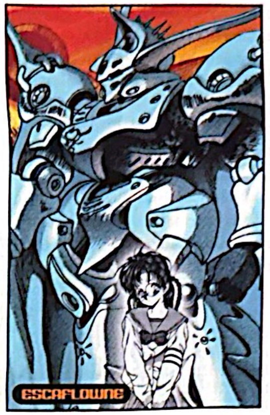
DC Comics is publishing a manga one-shot story featuring characters from their Sandman comics. Called "At Death's Door", the story features Death as she is forced to deal with the consequences of her brother Dream's actions. Check out www.anime-insider.com for a special preview! ■ JC



SWEET DREAMS Death may look different, but her personality is the same.

NEW VISIONS

A DIFFERENT 'ESCAFLOWNE' APPEARS IN MANGA FORMAT



ESCAFLOWNE

Fans have been clamoring for an *Escaflowne* manga and this year their wish comes true. TOKYOPOP is delivering *Escaflowne* in its "100% Authentic Manga" format starting on July 8.

Those who are familiar with the anime series may be surprised by its manga content. "TOKYOPOP's *Escaflowne* is the shonen manga by Aki Katsu...produced about a year and a half before the anime series was released," explains editor Mark Paniccia. "It's based on early concepts and designs, so you might notice some cosmetic differences...but it's not so different that it will alienate the anime fans."

Escaflowne chronicles the adventures of teenager Hitomi Hoshino who gets transported to the magical world of Gaia, and is drawn in to a conflict between warring factions.

■ Jennifer M. Contino

MANGA BY THE NUMBERS

1949	Year Osamu Tezuka's manga *Metropolis* was released in Japan
2003	Year Dark Horse released Osamu Tezuka's *Metropolis* manga in America
3	Number of volumes in the *Trigun* manga (Dark Horse)
6	Number of volumes available in the sequel, *Trigun Maximum* (unlicensed)
5	Age of precocious troublemaker Shinchan in *Crayon Shinchan*
10	Age of Bart Simpson, the character Shinchan is most compared to
49	Number of titles from Japanese manga-ka published by TOKYOPOP created in the "right to left" format
1	Number of titles from a Japanese manga-ka published by Fanboy and Plex Entertainment created in the "left to right" format

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE

RANMA 1/2: THE MANGA VS THE ANIME

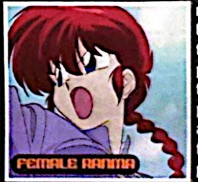
Young martial artist Ranma Saotome is cursed so that every time he's splashed with cold water he changes into a girl. When hot water strikes Ranma, the curse is reversed. Add rival martial artists and impossible love tetrahedrons and you have the hit anime and manga series from Viz. But what changes were made between the two series?

PERSONALITY CHANGE

In the manga, Ranma is keen, smart, and competent—he's not brilliant, but he's no slouch. In the anime, Ranma is portrayed as a brain-dead jock.

SHE'S GOT THE LOOK

In the anime Ranma has lovely red locks when he turns to his feminine side and his eyes change color, but his hair remains black in either state for the manga and his eyes never change.



FEMALE RANMA

WILD ANIMALS

In the manga the descendants of the Musk Dynasty have children who can turn into animal form. Ranma meets a group with a wolfboy, dragonboy, and tigerboy, but those party animals are missing in the anime.

COLOGNE'S THIEF

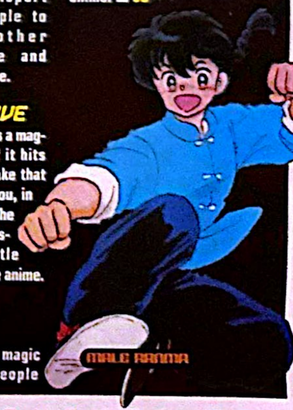
In the manga Happosai stole a magical bracelet from Cologne that caused people to fall in love with the first member of the opposite sex each viewed. In the anime, Happosai stole a magic mirror from Cologne that had the power to transport people to another time and place.

FISHING FOR LOVE

In the manga, Ryouga uses a magical fishing rod that, if it hits someone's chest will make that person fall in love with you, in an attempt to win Akane. The lure hits Ranma with disastrous results. This little fishing trip is absent in the anime.

CURE FOR THE CURSE

In the manga, there is a magic water that will cure people cursed from their watery curse. Ranma and his pals go off in search of this liquid, but their water-logged quest isn't in the anime. ■ JC



MALE RANMA

COMING COMICS

MANGA TO WATCH FOR THIS SUMMER!

JULY

ALIEN NINE BOOK TWO

The sixth grade girls in *Alien Nine* are more than meets the eye. Daily they struggle to conquer invaders, homework, and peer pressure! Hitoshi Tomizawa (CPM Manga, $15.95)

AMERIMANGA # 8

American manga anthology series featuring *Last Ditch*, *Reman Mythology*, *Soul Union*, *Warmth*, and *Without Darkness*. Various (IC Entertainment, $7.99)

BATTLE ROYALE VOL. 2

Shuuya needs his friends and the enigmatic Kawada's help to escape from the government's fight-to-the-death program. Koshun Takami (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL #80

Love, mystery, surprises, and loss are in store for the cast as this issue slows down the pace and they take part in a Japanese ceremony. Hiroaki Samura (Dark Horse, 2.99)

BOYS OVER FLOWERS: VOL. 1 HANA YORI DANGO

While trying to protect her best friend from school bullies, Makino unknowingly becomes their newest target. Yoko Kamio (Viz, $9.95)

CASTLE IN THE SKY VOL. 1-3

Everyone is after Sheeta, a young woman with a magical blue crystal around her neck that houses great powers. A young inventor, Pazu wants to protect and help Sheeta discover the secrets of her stone, but can the two overcome all the forces against them? Hayao Miyazaki (Viz, $9.95 each)

DIGIMON VOL. 4

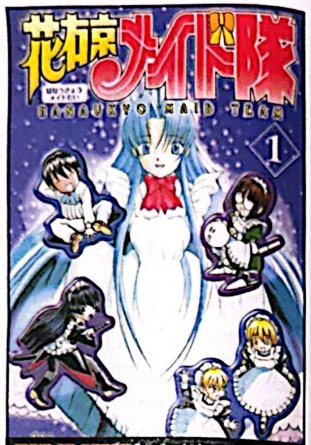
Time is running out to find the eighth Digidestined and now the evil Myotismon has moved the fight to Earth! Akiyoshi Hongo (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

EXCEL SAGA VOL. 1

The secret society ACROSS hopes to conquer the city, world, and universe. They also hope the neighbors won't notice. Rikdo Koshi (Viz $9.95)

FLAMES OF RECCA VOL. 1

Recca has dreamed of being a ninja his whole life. See how drastically his life changes when he discovers the power of the ninja was within him all along. Nabuyuki Anzai (Viz, $9.95)



MAID TO ORDER Tarou's a lucky guy if his only problem is which maid will take his shoes off.

HANAUKYO MAID TEAM VOL. 1

When his mother [illegible] never realize honoring his promise [illegible] his Grandfather would have such [illegible]! The house is staffed by numerous [illegible] women—all willing to "serve" Tarou [illegible] possible. Mori Shige (IC Entertain[illegible])

HYPERDOLLS VOL. 5

The crime-fighting [illegible] can't catch a break, even on vaca[illegible] their trip is interrupted by giant [illegible] Can the Dolls stop their rampage in [illegible] enjoy a little fun in the sun? Shimpei [illegible] (IC Entertainment, $12.95)

LOST WORLD

When scientists discover a new planet, they had to investigate. Unbeknownst to the group, criminals had stowed away on the vessel. Now the prehistoric planet is filled with peril, including deadly dinosaurs and unscrupulous villains. Osamu Tezuka (Dark Horse, $17.95)

LOVE HINA VOL. 9

Although Keitaro's finally passed the Tokyo University entrance exam, rival Seta announces his plans to marry Haruka. (TokyoPop, $9.99)

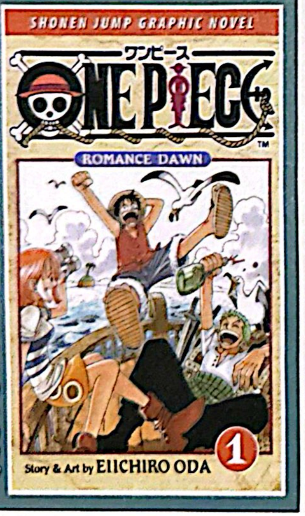
HOT PICK

ONE PIECE VOL. 1: ROMANCE DAWN

By Eiichiro Oda (Viz, $7.95)

WHY IT'S COOL Young Monkey D. Luffy has a dream—to be the king of the pirates by finding the legendary treasure called One Piece. His problem—he ate the cursed Gum Gum fruit, and turned into a rubber man. He's invulnerable to bullets, but he can't swim…and he doesn't have a crew…or a boat. So Monkey sets out to find his crew, which will include the master swordsman Roronoa Zoro (who uses three swords at once!), the sharp-witted navigator beauty Nami, a short, reindeer-looking fellow named Tony Tony Chopper, and more. Can he do it?

WHAT IT'S ABOUT There is no manga more fun, funnier, or more relentlessly entertaining than *One Piece*. In a fantasy world filled with pirates, Oda populates *One Piece* with the coolest heroes and the wackiest, most nefarious villains ever to roam the sea. It's top-of-the-line action-adventure, with fights, daring escapes and rescues, monsters, treasure, and it's hysterically funny. Evil clown pirates? Ridiculously awesome sword duels? A pirate who wants the skull on his pirate flag to have a straw hat? *One Piece* has it all. 'Nuff said. ■ Robert Bricken



NOZOMI

Shy young Nozomi's life changes when she wishes on a falling star. An original manga created just for the American market. Nao Yazawa (Fanboy, $5.95)

OH MY GODDESS! #99

Keichi and Belldandy are challenging the ghost motorcycle, but can they win against this magical apparition? Kosuke Fujishima (Dark Horse, $2.99)

RECORD OF LODOSS WAR: CHRONICLES OF THE HEROIC KNIGHT BOOK 5

In medieval times, evil forces are trying to use an innocent to resurrect their Goddess of Destruction. Can a band of adventurers stop this plot? Ryo Mizuno and Masato Natsumoto (CPM Manga, $15.95)

SHONEN JUMP # 9

Anthology series featuring *Dragon Ball Z*, *Naruto*, *One Piece*, *Shaman King*, *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, and *Yu Yu Hakusho*. Various (Viz, $4.95)

STORM RIDERS: COLLECTED ILLUSTRATIONS BOOK 3

A collection of images from *Storm Riders* that are enlarged and highly detailed. Wing Shing Ma (CO[illegible]SONE.COM, $29.95)

SUPER MANG[illegible]AST! # 34

Eclectic mix of [illegible]s featuring popular Japanese shonen [illegible]a including *Appleseed Hypernotes*, [illegible] *Seraphic Feather*, *Shadow Star*, and *W[illegible] Michael!?* Various (Dark Horse, $5.9[illegible]

TENCHI MUY[illegible]L. 2: DOOM TIME

Hapless misadventures plague Tenchi and pals as Dark [illegible]'s story unfolds. Hitoshi Okuda (Viz, [illegible])

TUXEDO VOL. 1

Ginji's dead, but he still has one chance to meet the girl of his dreams. If he's reincarnated as a penguin and lives out its natural life span, the powers that be will return him to life in his original body. Tokihiko Matsuura (Viz, $9.95)

TWILIGHT-X POCKET MANGA VOL. 1

Earth is in chaos after a decade of war. Humankind is fighting to be top-dog in a lawless land. Can a heroic band bring order to the world? Joseph Wight (Antarctic Press, $14.95)

AUGUST

3 X 3 EYES: THE SHADOW OF THE KUNLUN

Pai and Yakumo must break Kaiyan Wang's spell or the duo will never be human again. Yuzo Takada (Dark Horse, $17.95)

CANNON GOD EXAXXION: STAGE 2

Hoichi Kano, pilot of a gigantic robot, Exaxxion, is supposed to be mankind's savior against hostile invading aliens, but can the two defeat a horde? Kenichi Sonoda (Dark Horse, $14.95)

CLUB 9 VOLUME 2

Can Haruo remain true to her hometown boyfriend with so many eligible bachelors in Tokyo vying for her attention? Makoto Kobayashi (Dark Horse, $15.95)

LUPIN III VOL. 6

Oils well that ends well…especially if Lupin can defuse a bomb in an oil refinery faster than another thief to claim the bounty. Monkey Punch (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH VOL. 1

Three girls are summoned to a magical land to rescue a princess and restore order. Can Hikaru, Umi, and Fuu become the Magic Knights of legend or will they be killed by vicious forces? CLAMP (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

MARMALADE BOY VOL. 8

Miki learns why Yuu broke up with her, but their romance is rekindled when they vow never to have children. Their family has some revelations of their own, though, including secrets of Yuu's birth. Wataru Yoshizumi (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

MARS VOL. 13

As Rei's childhood memories return, he learn more of his mother's mental problems and more of how his father died. Will the secrets revealed make life easier for Rei? Fuyumi Soryo (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

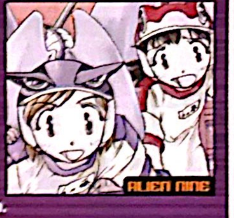
SLAYERS SPECIAL: LESSER OF TWO EVILS

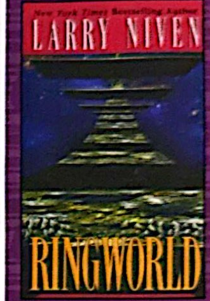
Fortune-hunter Lina and sorceress Naga meet beach bunnies, thieves, teachers, and more on an outrageous quest to find treasure and fun. Hajime Kanzaka, Tommy Ohtsuka and Studio Zombie (CPM Manga, $15.95)

GETTING TO KNOW

HITOSHI TOMIZAWA

Hitoshi Tomizawa is the creator of *Alien Nine*, the bimonthly sci-fi manga series currently being released in Western circles by CPM Manga. He believes in aliens, but can't tell us why! What he could reveal, though, was a lot of fun.





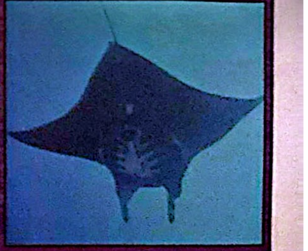
If you could work on any one character that you didn't create, which would you choose and why?
I would work on my favorite book, "Ringworld," by Larry Niven.

Who's your favorite singer or musical group?
Eurythmics.

What's a typical workday like?
I usually sleep when I want to and wake up when I want to. When I have a deadline, I'm usually awake, even thought I want to sleep. I don't set boundaries between work and play. I play during work, and vice versa.

What is the craziest thing that ever inspired you?
I haven't had any strange experiences, so I use my imagination. If I had a strange experience, I think I would like to research it further.

I've heard you're inspired by animals. What inspired the creation of the Borg from *Alien Nine*?
Yes, I get my inspiration from animals. In this case, the alien Borg were inspired by aquatic animals.



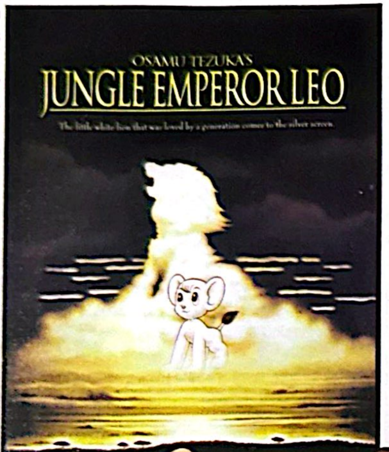
What advice do you have for young people interested in creating comics or manga?
Don't ever stop wondering. Don't ever lose your curiosity. ■ JC

LEO'S PRIDE

'JUNGLE EMPEROR LEO' ON THE PROWL THIS FALL

Lions and tigers and...oh forget it—it's just lions this fall.

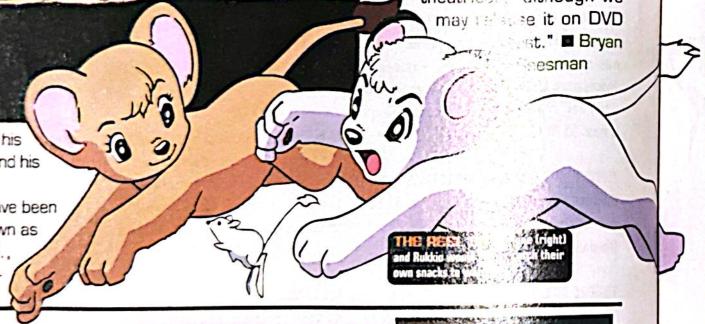
Media Blasters has finally acquired the North American distribution rights for the 1997 theatrical version of *Jungle Emperor Leo*, originally created by *Astro Boy* creator and "god of manga" Osamu Tezuka. Currently undergoing an English dubbing, Leo is tentatively planned to roar through select American cinemas after the summer movie season.



Long considered by many to be the blueprint for Disney's *The Lion King, Jungle Emperor Leo* tells the story of a young white lion born into captivity on a ship. After his father is killed by a hunter and his mother is sent to an overseas zoo, young cub Leo (a.k.a. Kimba) escapes and returns to his jungle homeland, obtains allies and sidekicks in a mandrill, parrot, and deer, and vows to excise the evil presence of his scarred nemesis and fellow lion Claw, and his hyena minions.

Over the last five decades there have been several incarnations of the story known as *Kimba the White Lion* in the U.S., including creator Osamu Tezuka's original 1950 manga, its subsequent 1965 TV series in Japan, a 1966 series and movie (which was edited together from several of the TV episodes), a 1989 sequel TV series, and this 1997 feature film written and directed by Yoshio Takeuchi (*Cat's Eye*).

Many fans may be wondering about the decision to release *Leo* in 2003. "We wanted to release this title as soon as possible," explains Takashi Sakuda, acquisitions manager of Media Blasters. "Last year was the first year we started releasing films theatrically, so it was a challenge to acquire this title. We promised we would release this title theatrically, although we may release it on DVD first." ■ Bryan Reesman



THE REST [illegible] (right) and Rukkio [illegible] their own snacks to [illegible]

TRAILERS

OTAKU ON FILM The 90-minute documentary called *Otaku Unite* will be premiered at this year's Anime Weekend Atlanta (September 26 to 28). Over two and a half years in the making, the film traces the history of anime fandom in the U.S. from the '60s onward. Once the con circuit has been conquered, is Sundance next? Only if they have hundreds of crazed cosplayers on film, we think...

EVEN MORE POKEMON Pokémon may not be the life-consuming powerhouse it used to be in Ameirca, but the franchise is still going strong in Japan. In just two days, 280,000 advance tickets were sold in anticipation of the July 19 opening of the sixth *Pokemon* movie called *Pocket Monster Advance Generation*. We think your grandkids'll be watching Pokémon 25 someday.

A PREMIERE YOU CAN'T REFUSE Satoshi Kon (*Perfect Blue*) is bringing his latest film to the U. S. for its English world premiere. *Tokyo Godfathers* (which sounds like an anime version of *Three Men and a Baby*) will be shown at the Big Apple Anime Fest this Labor Day weekend and Kon will also be present to introduce the film. You'd better show up, or you'll be swimming with the fishes. ■ BR

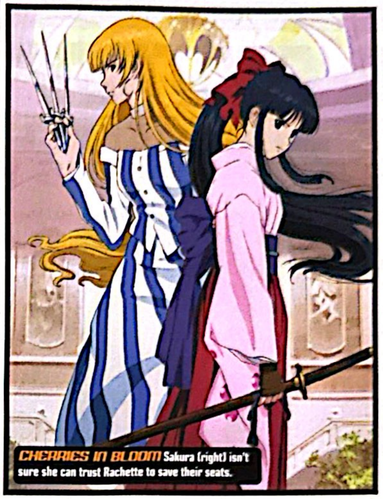
MY 'GOD'! Don't miss the Big Apple Anime Fest—it's full of stars!

FULL STEAM AHEAD

THE 'SAKURA WARS' MOVIE LANDS IN AMERICA

A popular TV series and OVA made available domestically through ADV Films, the "steampunk" epic *Sakura Wars* hit the big screen in Japan in 2001 and finally arrived at select screens in the United States in June via Pioneer.

Because of the strength of this title, Pioneer wanted to make sure the release was done right. "We talked to the distribution people about what the best markets were going to be," explained Chip Carter, marketing consultant for Pioneer. "We'll also be releasing the CD soundtrack when we release the DVD, which is coming out September 9th."



CHERRIES IN BLOOM Sakura (right) isn't sure she can trust Rachette to save their seats.

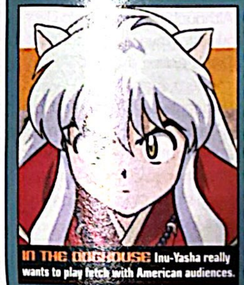
This 85-minute feature spin-off from the OVA series takes place in 1925. The heroine Sakura and her psychically-empowered female compatriots in the Imperial Fighting Troupe's Flower Brigade face new challenges when a new member is brought in from the NYC branch and the Japanese military brings in new American mecha to replace the Troupe's trusted machines. Things get hairy with internal squabbles, a renewed attack from the demon Kouma, and the disappearance of team members as they face their most deadly adversary yet.

Carter says that if the company gets a good response from *Sakura*'s limited theatrical opening that Pioneer could look to play the film on more screens. "One thing we want to do is we're looking at a screening at something like the San Diego ComiCon," he reveals. "We want to broaden the awareness. We think it's a great film and has a lot of potential." ■ BR

COMING SOON?

PLACE YOUR BETS

As big as anime is getting in the states, Japan still gets too many movies that don't...so far. Here's the new anime that's showing on silver screens overseas.



IN THE DOGHOUSE Inu-Yasha really wants to play fetch with American audiences.

INU-YASHA 3

The first two *Inu-Yasha* movies performed reasonably well at the box office; the premiere entry cracked $10 million in Japan, while its follow-up topped $8 million. While that might not inspire huge theatrical interest here, a third *Inu-Yasha* installment is already in the works in Japan. Perhaps a triple-bill would be apropos for stateside cons?

RAHXEPHON

With the *RahXephon* movie having finally hit Japanese screens the weekend of April 25th, this successor to *Evangelion* might find its way to American multiplexes sometime soon. Okay, so we might settle for art house or festival screenings!

THE CAT RETURNS

Directed by Hiroyuki Morita and executive produced by Hayao Mayazaki for Studio Ghibli, this sequel to *Whisper Of The Heart* grossed over $50 million after eleven weeks in the Japanese top 10 last summer. There's no word yet on a North American release. ■ BR

WORLD BOX OFFICE

ONE WEEKEND? THAT'S A COOL $3.9 MIL FOR 'CONAN'

We all have our own personal anime favorites that we are waiting to see hit the big screen, but have you ever wondered how they actually fared at the Japanese box office? *Anime Insider* researched some opening weekend figures to find out how recent anime features performed in their homeland. ■ BR

BEYBLADE

OPENING WEEKEND FIGURES FOR ANIME FILMS

TITLE	GROSS	RELEASE DATE
Spirited Away	$8.9M	July 27, 2001
Detective Conan	$3.9M	April 18, 2003
The Cat Returns	$3.36M	July 19, 2002
Crayon Shinchan	$2.3M	April 18, 2003
Beyblade The Movie	$1.27M	August 16, 2002
InuYasha 2	$552,480	Dec. 27, 2002

Sources: Box Office Mojo, IMDB.com

MASSIVE 'FANTASY' WORLD

THE BIGGEST VIDEOGAME FRANCHISE OF ALL TIME GOES ONLINE WITH 'FFXI'

The Final Fantasy series has always kept its fans lonely and isolated, as they lock themselves away for weeks to play the newest game by themselves. But not anymore.

At the 2003 E3 videogame conference in Los Angeles, Square Enix and Sony announced that *Final Fantasy XI*, the online massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG for short) will be coming to North America for PlayStation 2 and PC in early 2004. What's more, *FFXI* will be packaged with the PS2 Hard Disc Drive, which adds memory and processing power to the console, and is required to play *FFXI*.

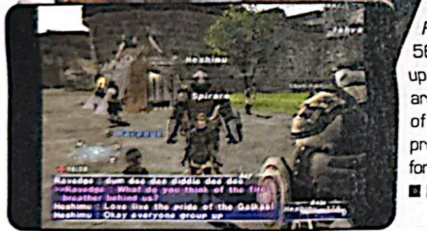
Set in the world of Vana'diel, Square Enix promises that *FFXI* will have all the benefits of a regular MMORPG with the coherent plot and storyline that has been the Final Fantasy trademark, There will be over 100 areas (including mountains, forests, deserts and dungeons), three distinct kingdoms (the Republic of Bastok, known for its industry; the fortress-like San d'Orian kingdom; and the Federation of Windhurst, known for its wisdom) and several continents to explore in Vana'diel, and the game will keep going even when you aren't playing it—along with specific events.

Players can choose the gender of their characters, all aspects of their physical appearance, as well as the race—including the very human-like Humes, the beastly and powerful Galka (who are male-only), the short and way-too-cute Tarutaru, the also beastly (and female-only) hunter/thieves the Mithra, and the Elvaan, which looks a lot like Humes but with pointy ears. Besides also choosing their county of origin, players can choose the traditional Final Fantasy character classes, and level them up by gaining experience—but you'll be able to switch character classes, à la most Final Fantasy games.

The gameplay will take three forms: Missions, Quests and Conquests. Missions are small tasks, which you can undergo by yourself or with a party to level up and increase your reputation. Quests are like Missions, but they are tied to the main storyline of *Final Fantasy XI* and deal with the overarching plot. Conquests are missions that affect the entire kingdom you're in; every week, the stats for your kingdom get measured, and the best kingdom wins and gets rewarded with goods and items. [illegible] characters with [illegible] can compete in conq[illegible] you have to earn t[illegible]

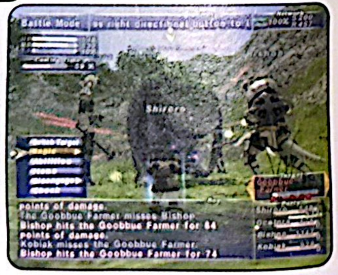
Althoug[illegible] Disc Drive is required, p[illegible] connect to *FFXI* with ei[illegible]dband or a 56K modem [illegible]. Parties of up to18 people [illegible]rmed to run around Vana'diel [illegible] the enemies of the kingdom [illegible] Square Enix promises there [illegible] plenty to do for the anti-social single player as well.

■ Robert Bricken



Ravedge : dum dee dee diddle dee dee
>>Ravedge : What do you think of the fire breather behind us?
Heshimu : Love live the pride of the Galkas!
Heshimu : Okay everyone group up

FINAL WORDS *FFXI* will have turn-based battles (right), easy player communications (above), CG movies & cute character types, like the Hume (top).



points of damage.
The Goobbue Farmer misses Bishop.
Bishop hits the Goobbue Farmer for 64 points of damage.
Kobiak misses the Goobbue Farmer.
Bishop hits the Goobbue Farmer for 74

THE BEST OF E3 4 U

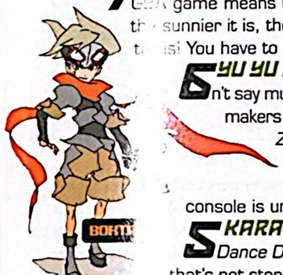
YOUR CHEAT SHEET TO THE TOP 10 COOLEST REVELATIONS AT E3

400 exhibitors, 62,000 attendees and thousands of videogames—that's E3, the yearly Electronic Entertainment Expo held in L.A., where the hottest games get shown in front of drooling geeks. This year, *Anime Insider* was drooling with 'em, and here's what we salivated on the most. Get a napkin and read on!

10 EYE TOY Sony must be bored, because they keeping trying all these new gadgets like the Eye Toy, a camera which sits on top of your TV and puts you literally inside the games. Simply move your arms to beat up ninjas, whack moles, etc.

9 DEAD OR ALIVE ONLINE One of the prettiest fighting games ever, Tecmo scheduled *DOA* for Xbox Live. This winter, have the chesty ladies of *DOA* trounce your friends and enemies.

8 YU-GI-OH! Goodness gracious, is Yugi a popular fellow. Konami's bringing out new three games, and they look fantastic! *The Falsebound Kingdom*, due on GameCube in fall, is a real-time strategy game; the GBA's *The Sacred Cards* is another RPG; but *Power of Chaos*, due fall on PC, is the *Yu-Gi-Oh!* card game, exactly!



7 BOKTAI Subtitled *The Sun Is In your Hand*, this GBA game means it—it can sense sunlight, and the sunnier it is, the more powerful your character is! You have to play outside to beat bosses!

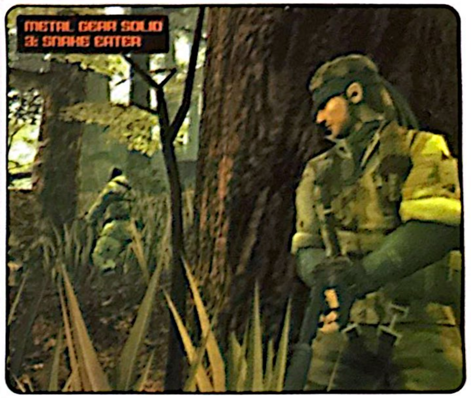
6 YU YU HAKUSHO Alright, they didn't say much, but this is for sure—Atari, makers of the best-selling *Dragon Ball: Z Budokai* fighting game, will be bringing out a *YYH* game in 2004, although the specific console is undetermined.

5 KARAOKE REVOLUTION The *Dance Dance* revolution isn't over, but that's not stopping Konami from making you sing for it as well, with November's *Karaoke Revolution* on PS2. Hit the right notes, pitch, length and rhythm, or get booed off stage.

4 LUPIN THE 3RD Bandai must have heard our plea, because this November they're bringing the *Lupin* PS2 game over! You can pick pockets, disguise yourself as Zenigata, and hang with the *Lupin* crew.

3 BUDOKAI 2 No one doubted they were going to make a sequel to the hit *DBZ* PS2 fighting game. It adds 14 new characters and unbelievably better graphics (it looks *exactly* like the anime), plus buildings to crash through!

2 METAL GEAR SOLID 3 Konami only showed a video, but *wow*. Set in a lush jungle, Snake used a ton of new moves and even more realistic physics.

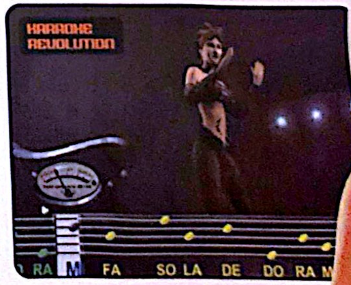


It looks like you'll even have to eat in the game—he actually devoured a snake in the video!

1 PSP The Game Boy should be scared. Sony announced the PlayStation Portable (or "PSP"), which uses optical discs and memory sticks and a USB port for add-ons! It's more powerful than a PlayStation and can show DVD-level pictures! ■ RB

EYE TOY
EYE TOY

LUPIN THE 3RD'S FUJIKO



RELEASE SCHEDULE

WE PICK 'EM, YOU PLAY 'EM. HERE'S WHAT'S COMING THIS SUMMER

JULY

APE ESCAPE 2

Those crazy primates are on the loose again in this sequel to the 1999 PlayStation title, *Ape Escape*. Use your monkey radar, net and a variety of other cool gadgets to collect hundreds of cheeky monkeys as they attempt to avoid capture. (Ubi Soft, PS2)

APE ESCAPE 2

ARC THE LAD: TWILIGHT OF THE SPIRITS

The Japanese-favorite *Arc the Lad* series is making its way to the PS2. This traditional RPG features combat and exploration, as players take control of two young warriors, as they seek to set things right in the world. (SCEA, PS2)

ARMORED CORE 3

ARMORED CORE 3: SILENT LINE

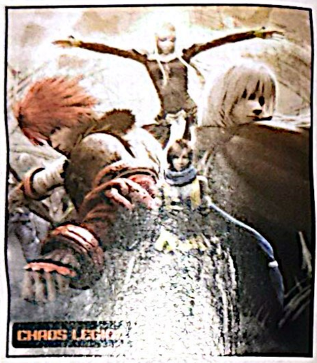
This upgraded expansion in the *AC* series features diverse missions, new core parts for customization, smarter AI and additional camera views. Dodge an onslaught of enemy fire in this mech-tastic action game. (Agetec, PS2)

BLOODY ROAR EXTREME

Prepare for another beastly beat down in this 3D fighter as characters vie for the top dog spot. Transforming from human forms into alternate beast personas, players can go claw-to-claw, as they open up a different set of techniques to test their strength and skill. (Konami, Xbox)

CHAOS LEGION

This gothic action/adventure title casts players into the role of swordsman Sieg Wahrheit as he and legions slash their way through Capcom's latest creation. Sieg can summon his legions to assist him directly or indirectly in battles in order to level the playing field when facing multiple enemies. Within the foreboding world, players will find themselves drawn into dark themes and intense combat action, akin to *Devil May Cry* meets *Dynasty Warriors*. (Capcom, PS2)



DRAGON B[illegible] II

Goku retur[illegible] fury, but now you can sel[illegible]ers to scuffle with. Taki[illegible] of Trunks to the Cell [illegible] boasts better graphics and fi[illegible]ell as a cameo by the Red R[illegible] GBA)

MARIO GOLF: TOA[illegible]

Get the iron out as Mario and party makes an appearance on the GameCube for some golf swinging action. Following the success of the N64 version, which makes golfing not only intuitive to play but incredibly fun, this version will be given a polish, visually and gameplay wise, so expect friends to stay for hours on end. Fore! (Nintendo, GC)

ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS VIII

Set in the same setting as its popular action series counterpart, *Dynasty Warriors*, Koei brings this long-running, engrossing strategy game to the PS2. As one of the kings of China circa 300 A.D., you've got to lie, manipulate, win over and declare war to unite China. Tactics, politics and character development all blend together as you prepare for battle. (Koei, PS2)

UNLIMITED: SAGA

Second to Final Fantasy, the SaGa series is one of Square's longest running franchises, and justly so—it's got great fantasy stories, and always has ground-breaking graphics. This oft-delayed installment of *SaGa* blends 2D and 3D graphics to create vibrant worlds as players embody seven different characters, each with their own storyline. (Square Enix, PS2)

AUGUST

DINO CRISIS 3

DINO CRISIS 3

Differing from the previous installments of the series, *Dino Crisis 3* is set far in the future and features a male hero. Prepare for futuristic, survival horror gameplay with sharp claws and even sharper teeth in this Xbox exclusive title. Features beads-of-sweat action and a fair share of puzzles, along with loads of firepower to take down critters aplenty. (Capcom, Xbox)

F-ZERO GX

The bizarre semi-superheroes of the F-Zero world return in this blindingly fast futuristic racing game. Developed by Sega for Nintendo (weird, huh?), this F-Zero is not for the slow of reflexes or those who get motion sick. Take your GC memory card and take it to the arcade to show off your stats—they're interactive! (Nintendo, GC)

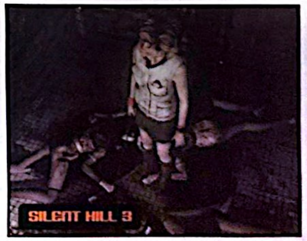
.HACK//OUTBRE[illegible]

Breaking out w[illegible] third installation in the four-part RPG/anime series *.hack*, Bandai contin[illegible] enthrall .hackers everywhere. This pseudo MMORPG offers a mix of comb[illegible]ploration and twisting storylines. *Outbreak* comes complete with an anime [illegible] to help drive the story and characters so unique, that you'll forget that yo[illegible]ffline. (Bandai, PS2)

POKÉMON PI[illegible] RUBY & SAPPHIRE

Tired of catchi[illegible] those Pokémon the old-fashioned way? Then bust out the pinballs, and flip [illegible] way to the championship with over 200 Pokémon to catch on the way. Two [illegible]s and plenty of bonus stages will keep your fingers nimble. (Nintendo, G[illegible]

SILENT HILL 3



The scariest game franchise on the market returns. A new female character visits the town of Silent to figure out her past and fight off several skin scrawling monsters (literally!) armed only with a flashlight and a ground-breaking graphics engine—which makes it look like the scariest movie you'll ever play. (Konami, PS2)

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4: EVOLUTION

Virtua Fighter 4 was a near-masterpiece of 3D fighting, so *Evolution*—which has two brand new characters, new modes and arenas, as well as 1,500 new costumes items—is probably an out-and-out masterpiece. Plus, it looks even better thanks to that Sega magic. (Sega, PS2)

HOT PICK

SOUL CALIBUR II

Due August from Namco on PS2, Xbox and GameCube

The best fighting game on the PlayStation? *Soul Blade*. Best fighting game on the Dreamcast? Its sequel, *Soul Calibur*. Best fighting game ever? Well, we were going to say *Soul Calibur* again, but that was before Namco announced they were brining *Soul Calibur II* to all three platforms this August. The reason *Soul Calibur* ruled was that it had incredible 3D graphics and character animations, luscious 3D backgrounds, stellar music, a ton of extras, including gameplay modes, characters and art galleries to unlock, more stuff—and the most brilliant fighting engine ever, which made it easy for newbies to pull off cool moves while being incredibly deep for the hardcore gamers.

Soul Calibur II does everything better. Better graphics, smoother play, wilder attacks—and some of the rings have a few walls, which will change your moves! The bonuses are back and bigger, as the Edge Master mode returns, which has you fighting in huge number of ways to earn cool and bizarre weapons. Plus, all your favorites are back, including Taki, Mitusrugi and Ivy, a few newcomers show up like the elbow blade-wielding Talim and Sophitia's sister Cassandra—and each console gets its own bonus character! This game has everything, and is the best fighting game around to boot! Do not miss it. ■ **Robert Bricken**

HOT TIPS

FOR THE BEST GAMERS ONLY

DYNASTY WARRIORS 4 (PS2)

DYNASTY WARRIORS 4

Looking for some saddles? Look no further. For the elephant Saddle, ride an Elephant into the enemy base during the Nanman campaign. For the Hex Mark saddle, choose the Yellow Turban fight during the Yellow Musou mode, then defeat Guan Yu and Zhao Yun, before the reinforcements arrive and start fighting Liu Bei.

.HACK//MUTATION (PS2)

.HACK//MUTATION

Want some goodies? Every tenth time Kite uses his Data Drain ability, a new page in the Book of 1000 will appear. After you beat the game, these can be uses to open up new wallpaper, music, videos, and well as statistics for all your gameplay.

IKARUGA (GC)

757600
IKARUGA

Ready for a crazy amount of extras? It's pretty simple—all you have to do is keep playing!

After six hours of gameplay, the Continues will increase to nine; seven hours grants you unlimited Continues—so keep playing! After 10 hours, two art galleries are opened and after15 hours, you'll open the sound test with the game's music.

POKÉMON RUBY & SAPPHIRE (GBA)

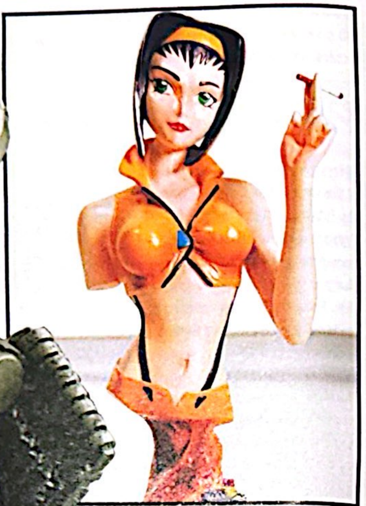
The best way to catch the most Pokémon? Try these plans of action. Search in the areas of long grass during your adventure (in areas such as Hoenn). Secondly, try surfing the shallow waters to obtain specific aquatic Pokémon (and quicken your water travel). You'll need HM03 (Surf) and the Balance Badge, plus a Pokémon that can surf. Also try the Rock Smash skill (HM08) to find rare Pokémon under rocks. Diving into the ocean to search the bottom for Pokémon is also a great plan. ■ **RB & MS**

STUFF

WASH MY HANDS FOR DINNER? I DON'T THINK SO!

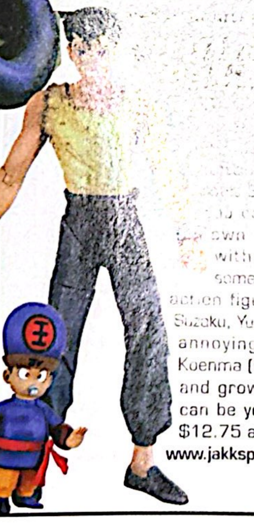
TETSUOOOO!!

Ah, that joke never gets old—and neither does Tetsuo, the biker punk turned power-hungry flesh-monster from *Akira*. Toycom has immortalized him and his electroid-encrusted arm in a PVC statue; at $35, these are sure to not break the bank.
www.toycom.net



BUST-ED BEAUTY

The beautiful and sexy Faye Valentine has had fans drooling all over her even long after the *Cowboy Bebop* series ended—so why stop now? Dark Horse introduces this limited edition Faye Valentine mini-bust, [illegible] available for $44.[illegible] [illegible] avail- [illegible].com



[illegible]A

[illegible] *Ghost* [illegible] making [illegible] ver on [illegible] work's [illegible] but now you can have your own adventures with these awesome *YYH* series 2 action figures. Botan, Suzaku, Yusuke, and that annoying boss/brat Koenma (in his little kid and grown-up forms) can be yours for only $12.75 apiece.
www.jakkspacific.com

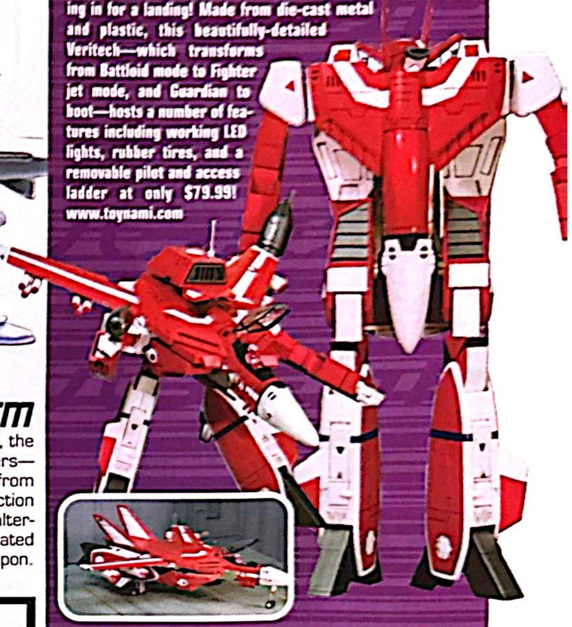
MASS-PRODUCED MAYHEM

Despite making their appearance only in the movies, the EVA Units [illegible]13—yep, the Mass-Produced monsters—are arguably the coolest EVAs there are! Imported from Japan at $[illegible].99, Kaiyodo's 7-inch-tall Mass Production action figure has many points of articulation with alternate hands, weapons, limbs, and even a variant defeated EVA-02 articulated base for it to stand triumphantly upon.
www.kaiyodo.co.jp

HOT PICK

MIRIYA'S VF-1J MASTERPIECE EDITION

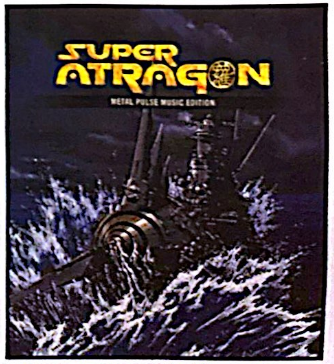
Forget Transformers. Forget Go-Bots (actually, we already have). This is the prototype of cool for transforming vehicles. Now, the last of five in the *Robotech* Masterpiece Collection, Miriya's red and white VF-1J, is coming in for a landing! Made from die-cast metal and plastic, this beautifully-detailed Veritech—which transforms from Battloid mode to Fighter jet mode, and Guardian to boot—hosts a number of features including working LED lights, rubber tires, and a removable pilot and access ladder at only $79.99!
www.toynami.com



HAND-HELD MOVIES

It's a whole new way to enjoy the *DBZ* movies! These Diamond exclusives *Dragon Ball Z* Filmcardz are mega-cool—slide one of the see-through, art-laden card into the viewer and check animation cels from the movie! These special sets include five packs of Filmcardz, the viewer and a special tin to hold 'em in. Pick *Lord Slug Cooler's Revenge* for your viewing pleasure!
www.diamondpreviews.com

MUSIC TO FLOAT YOUR BOAT



Super Atragon was one of the coolest anime from the early days. It had intrigue, a solid sci-fi plot (based on a Japanese novel), and amazing music (the opening theme ranks up there with John Williams' best). Hear it for yourself with the soundtrack, composed by Masamichi Amano and performed by the Warsaw Philharmonic and Versailles Orchestras. Available for $14.99.
www.advfilms.com

YOU DON'T KNOW JACK

Transported from the past into a future where his wizard-nemesis Aku has already won, Samurai Jack has trained all his life to defeat the evil shapeshifter. For $125, this awesome, limited *Samurai Jack* three-part training statue shows him in pivotal points in his life, training as a baby, as a kid, and finally as the grown-up Jack we all know and love. Together, the three-piece set forms Samurai Jack's family seal!

www.cartoonnetwork.com

WHERE CAN I FIND A BABYSITTER THIS LATE?

DUELLING FOR THE MATH-CHALLENGED

YU-GI-OH!
DUELIST CALCULATOR

The least fun thing about *Yu-Gi-Oh!* Is keeping track of your Life Points—math is a drag! Which is why everyone needs to snag one of these super-cool Duelist Calculators. It makes figuring out your Life Points easy, so you can spend more time Dueling and less time doing arithmetic. Available for $7.99.

www.upperdeck.com

A SECRET NO LONGER

Long before Gainax made the incredible series *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, it made *Nadia: The Secret of Blue Water*. It was remarkable because of its storytelling, maturity, and the amazing character designs by *Evangelion*'s Yoshiyuki Sadamoto—especially its vegetarian title character, Nadia. Imported from Japan and standing over 10" tall, this *Secret of Blue Water* Nadia statue, like the series, should not be overlooked.

www.diamondpreviews.com

HEY...THOSE AREN'T GUCCI SHOES AT ALL!

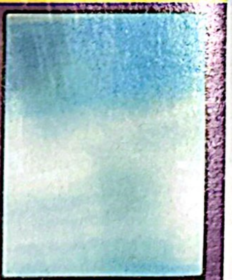
"SOLD" ONLINE

SOME OF THE CRAZY CRAP PEOPLE ARE SELLING ON THE NET

ANIME RUSSIAN NESTING DOLLS Now you can grow your own anime girls at home. Keep 'em warm! $49.99

'NARUTO' KONDHA COSPLAY HEADBAND You too can have a metal plate…on your head! $55.00

HELLO KITTY PLASTIC BOWLING PIN SET The perfect way to vent at the end of the day. $6.50



'AKIRA' SKY BACKGROUND Because not everyone can have an original painting of a blue sky. $24.99 ■ MB

JOURNEY THROUGH INU-YASH'S JAPAN!
WIZARD ANIME INSIDER
WITCH HUNTER ROBIN EPISODE GUIDE AND COVER!
MEET THE ONE PIECE CREW—AND THE HOTTEST JAPAN-ONLY ANIME SUPERSTARS!
TOP 10 ANIME YOU CAN'T SEE YET!
ISSUE #9 ON SALE AUG 20, 2003
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wizarduniverse.com

KENSHIRO'S BIG HIT

In a terrible, bleak future, only the last remaining master of Hokuto Shinken, the ultimate martial art, can settle the warring masses—but first Kenshiro's got to defeat Roah! Beautifully articulated and rendered, you can decide the fate of the world with the two *Fist of the North Star* action figures of Roah and Kenshiro, $17.99 each. **www.diamondcomics.com**

I'LL SHOW YOU MY BRUCE LEE IMPRESSION FOR SOME TIGHT PANTS.

THANKS, JAPAN!

GOODIES SO BIZARRE YOU GOTTA GO TO ASIA FOR 'EM!

AQUA MAN Once you've milked every single licensing possibility already, market die-cut seaweed in the shapes of your characters. Hence *Ultraman*'s enduring and odd-tasting popularity.

CHEESE WHIZ From *Heidi of the Alps* comes this dual pack which contains cheese snacks and a figure of Heidi making cheese! The contents can be arranged to make a diorama of Heidi being overrun by mutant cheese balls.

TAKE A PILL! Tthe popular anime series *Hikaru no Go* has gotten kids interested in the game of Go. Very little mention has been made of how it's gotten kids interested in taking medication, as this pill case proves.

STARK RAVING FLUFFY *Rave* is the embodiment of good in the form of a magical sword. *Rave* mittens, on the other hand, are simply gloves in the shape of Plue, a half-dog, half-snowman that follows the lead character around in the TV series.

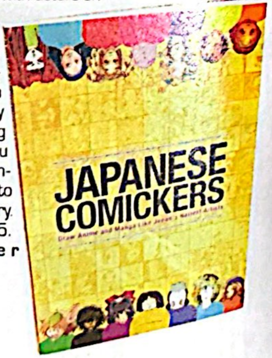
HANDS OFF! Why furnish your home with unpronounceable Ikea products when you can use these *Gundam* hand-shaped floor chairs instead? It's just what Martha Stewart called for. ■

RIDE OFF TO THE SUNSET WITH ONE

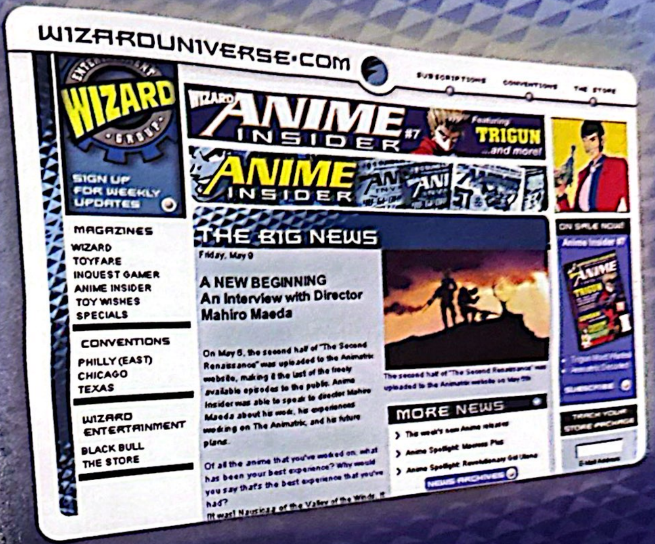
A beautiful addition to any collection, this cold-cast 1/15th-scale statue of *Berserk*'s Griffith Millennium Falcon from Toycom is a little steep at $220, but it certainly shows in the amount of detail put into it. At 9 inches tall and 10 wide, it comes with alternative heads. Get one now or you'll go berserk when they're all gone. **www.toycom.net**

READY...DRAW!

There've been other published before [illegible] drawing manga—but what about coloring? *Jap[illegible] Comickers* compiles artwork from 14 of Japan's ho[illegible] artists in a portfolio ranging from color pencil to comp[illegible] graphics to watercolors, along with details on how some pieces were created. Whether you're interested in producing your own art, or simply appreciate looking at the pages, you should really consider adding this to your personal library. Read it for $24.95. **www.harpercollins.com**



A NEW UNIVERSE IS BORN



Friday, May 9

A NEW BEGINNING
An Interview with Director
Mahiro Maeda

On May 6, the second half of "The Second Renaissance" was uploaded to the Animatrix website, making it the last of the freely available episodes to the public. Anime Insider was able to speak to director Mahiro Maeda about his work, his experiences working on The Animatrix, and his future plans.

Of all the anime that you've worked on, what has been your best experience? Why would you say that's the best experience that you've had?

It was! Nausicaa of the Valley of the Winds. It

The second half of "The Second Renaissance" was uploaded to the Animatrix website on May 5th

- The week's new Anime releases
- Anime Spotlight: Macross Plus
- Anime Spotlight: Revolutionary Girl Utena

For the latest news, exclusive offers, subscriptions, convention tickets and everything else Anime Insider!

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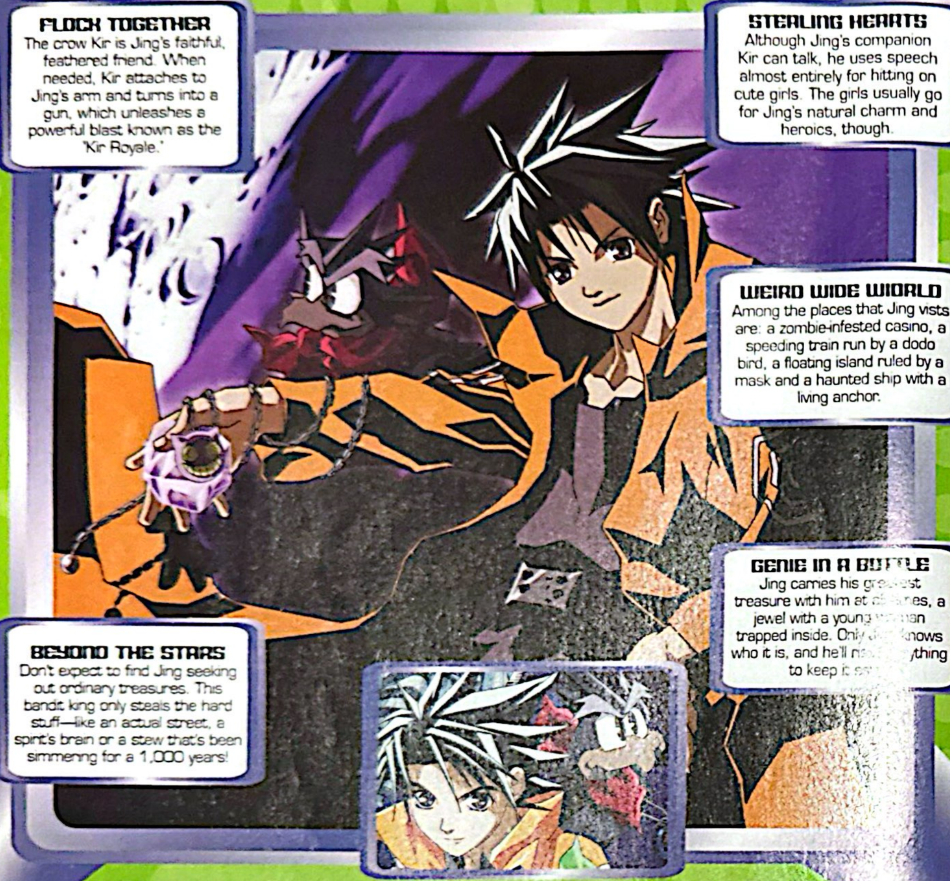
BY REBECCA BUNDY

INSIDER PROFILE

JING OF 'KING OF BANDIT JING'



FLOCK TOGETHER
The crow Kir is Jing's faithful, feathered friend. When needed, Kir attaches to Jing's arm and turns into a gun, which unleashes a powerful blast known as the 'Kir Royale.'

STERLING HEARTS
Although Jing's companion Kir can talk, he uses speech almost entirely for hitting on cute girls. The girls usually go for Jing's natural charm and heroics, though.

WEIRD WIDE WORLD
Among the places that Jing vists are: a zombie-infested casino, a speeding train run by a dodo bird, a floating island ruled by a mask and a haunted ship with a living anchor.

BEYOND THE STARS
Don't expect to find Jing seeking out ordinary treasures. This bandit king only steals the hard stuff—like an actual street, a spirit's brain or a stew that's been simmering for a 1,000 years!

GENIE IN A BOTTLE
Jing carries his greatest treasure with him at all times, a jewel with a young woman trapped inside. Only Jing knows who it is, and he'll risk anything to keep it safe.

ORIGIN: Legend tells of a family of bandits whose techniques are passed down through the generations. The most skilled of these bandits, the Bandit King, could steal the very stars from the sky. Who would suspect that the youthful Jing is this legendary Bandit King? With him is Kir, the smooth-talking bird who moonlights as a powerful weapon that aids Jing in his escapades. He'll need Kir's help, along with his own skill and wit, to defeat a deadly rogue's gallery of enemies—and to steal the most outrageous treasures on his bizarre planet.

NOW APPEARING: You can join Jing and Kir starting July 22 when ADV Films releases the first four episodes to DVD. The anime series runs 13 episodes long, and the first volume will also be available by itself or in a snazzy collectible art box! Can't wait that long to meet the King of Bandits? TOKYOPOP released the first manga volume (of seven) in June, which covers some different adventures than the anime. Finally, more Jing adventures may be on the way with the announcement of the production of a new three-episode OVA series in Japan. ⓐ

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